

NEW YEAR • NEW TITLE

1958

In this issue:  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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*Father and Child* by Ben Shahn

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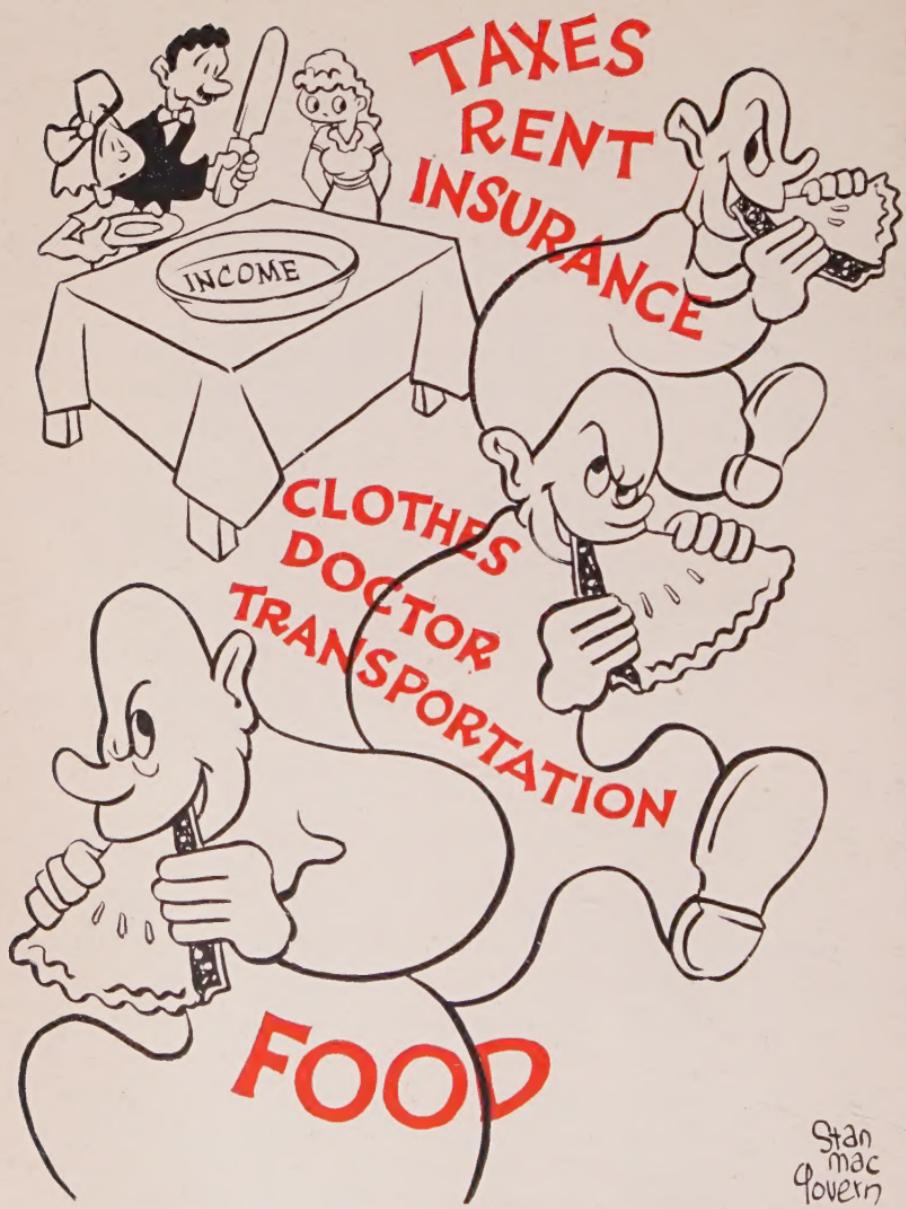
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**\$3,000 a year =** {   
 **No meat**  
 **No overcoat**  
 **No house**  
 **No car**  
 **No babies**

**At today's prices, a middle class family cannot afford the way of life trademarked "Made in U. S. A."**

**By John Kord Lagemann**

**Y**OU HEAR people talking about going places and doing things," Sue Logan says, "and sometimes you feel like the whole world's giving a big party to which you aren't invited."

That sums up—perhaps even better than facts and figures—the kind of thing that is happening to the lives of average Americans. Inflation is a cliché now, but people like the Logans are its living victims. The Logans are a typical city family trying to live on Jeff Logan's \$3,000 a year, and it just isn't working out.

If a dictator came along and confiscated Jeff's savings, cut his standard of living in half, took

**John Kord Lagemann** says he has found only one way to beat the rising cost of living—making his own furniture. Professionally, he has been a writer for newspapers, magazines, and radio programs ever since the '20s.

away his car and his camera, yanked out his telephone and radio, limited his entertainment to five or six movies a year, denied his wife an operation and forbade her to have another child, Jeff Logan would rear up on his hind legs and fight back. Rising prices have done these things and more to Jeff and his family, and all Jeff can do is pay for as many of life's necessities as his money will buy—and do without the rest.

Nobody can say Jeff Logan doesn't know how to handle money—a little or a lot of it. As a trust administrator in a New York bank, Jeff superintends the affairs of estates ranging up to \$20,000,000. During lunch hour he stands in line to eat at counters where he will not have to tip. If he indulges in table service at a drugstore or chile parlor, he does without dessert to leave the waitress a dime. Then he goes back to wrestle with

the problems of a client who has just decided to maintain a cash balance of \$1,000,000—"in case of emergency," his attorney explains.

Because such work entails great responsibility, Jeff's salary is almost twice that of the average bank employee and Jeff feels he has to work twice as hard. When he stays late at the office, he can't phone Sue, his wife, to tell her not to wait supper. Their party line meant a lot to them socially, too, but they had it taken out last year when it became a simple question of doing without \$3.81 worth of food each month to pay the bill.

It's the same with getting to and from work. On the train the round trip between home and office used to take forty minutes and 48c as against an hour and forty minutes, two changes, rush-hour crowds, and 10c fare on the subway. Jeff takes the subway now because he can't afford to squander 38c.

JEFF IS WHAT his wife calls "a big, comfortable sort of man to have around the house." After supper they were happy enough just listening to the radio while Patsy, their eight-year-old daughter, sang herself to sleep in bed.

They still sit around in the evenings but Jeff has certainly missed that radio—ever since last spring when Patsy knocked it off the stand in the living room. Sue's kid brother, an electrical engineering

student fresh out of the Army, has been promising to fix it for a long while now, but between school and his girl he hasn't had time. Jeff prefers waiting to paying \$13 to have it repaired in the radio shop.

Every so often Jeff and Sue used to take a night off and go out on a "spree"—generally a double feature at the neighborhood movie or penny ante poker at a friend's house. The poker games aren't so much fun now that Jeff can't afford to lose the price of a haircut or a dry cleaning job on his suit.

A movie has to be good to get them out of the house. The local sitters, young neighborhood girls who used to charge \$1 an evening to stay with Patsy, have raised it to \$1.50. Jeff stays home while Sue goes. Next night, if she recommends the picture very highly, he may go while Sue stays home. That way they can still afford about five movies a year. The last one they saw was two months ago. "I guess the title sold us," says Sue. "It was *Great Expectations*."

Jeff is not one to shoot off his mouth about his troubles. Even in his own living room when friends drop over, he generally sits back in his chair with a quiet smile and lets others do the talking. When he does have something to say, he says it with careful earnestness. Sometimes he'll squint at the crease of his dark pin-stripe trousers as if he were sighting down

### TODAY:

#### The Logans' Budget for *Three* People

Food	\$950.00
Shelter & Utilities	670.00
Clothing	327.00
Care of Person	141.00
Husband's Allowance	416.00
Income Tax	228.00
Social Security	30.00
Insurance	80.00
Medical Care	118.00
Entertainment & Miscellaneous	40.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>

### TEN YEARS AGO:

Budget for Clerk's Family of <i>Five</i> *	
Food	\$570.44
Shelter & Utilities	591.00
Clothing	348.84
Care of Person	56.92
Husband's Allowance	135.00
Income Tax	None
Social Security	11.01
Insurance	152.00
Medical Care	75.00
Entertainment & Miscellaneous	224.78
Automobile	291.42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,456.41</b>

• Ten years ago, the clerk lived comfortably for \$544 less than it costs the Logans merely to exist. Today, food for *three* costs 67 per cent more than it did for *five*, while household costs and personal care (repairs, haircuts, medicine, etc.) are about \$200 more. Income tax and the breadwinner's inflated daily expenses eat up the rest. The pre-war family had almost six times as much money to spend for entertainment, charity, and incidentals. If they gave up their car, and skimped on clothing, amusements, insurance, and minor luxuries—as the Logans are forced to do—they could have saved at least \$1,000 a year on a \$3,000 income.

\*From a report by the Heller Committee, University of California Department of Social Economics.

the barrel of a gun. Now and then he'll brush invisible specks off his knee with a flick of his fingers. "When he does that," Sue says, "he's cross. Something is bothering him." Lately, Jeff's been brushing off quite a lot of specks.

It's not as if Jeff were a loafer. He's in love with his job, attends church regularly, votes the Republican ticket, and pays cash for everything. By the standards of his church, his party, and his bank, he's made a success of his life. That's why it is harder to swallow what high prices are doing to him now.

At seventeen, just before the depression, he quit high school for a \$700-a-year job as pageboy in a

bank. Against a handicap of no college education, it took him ten years of hard work to reach \$1,400 as a clerk—enough, he and Sue figured, to get married on. Then Jeff made it his goal to work his way up to administrator.

"We used to dream about how we'd live when that happened," Sue remembers. "On \$3,000, we could have three or four children, take out plenty of insurance, buy a new car, start payments on a home of our own, and lay something aside every month. It was an ideal, and we hardly dared hope Jeff could make it in ten years."

Jeff made it all right—just last year. "I make twice as much now as when we were married," he says,

"and we live only half as well."

What happens to the \$3,000? Before the Logans can lay hands on it, a third is lopped off by taxes, utilities, rent, and insurance. Jeff only started paying income tax in 1942, when his salary topped \$2,000. His tax was \$77 then, plus \$21.50 for social security. For 1947, it was \$228 plus \$30 for social security.

In their rent of \$480 a year (without heat), the Logans are luckier than most; and they don't even like to think what could happen if rent control went the way of OPA. Coal has risen from \$11.50 a ton to \$18, and their hot-air furnace is decrepit and wasteful. But by burning old newspapers to take off the chill in early spring and late fall, they keep the coal bill at an even \$100.

The utilities, gas and electricity, run about the same as other years —\$90. Jeff's \$3,000 life insurance, at \$80 a year, is the kind known in the profession as a "burial policy." Sue jokingly warns him he won't get much of a funeral.

"Dissolves instantly, leaves no trace," says the advertisement for a headache remedy which Jeff sees twice a day in the subway. The second \$1,000 of Jeff's salary has the same virtue.

Jeff's allowance—\$8 a week for transportation to and from the office, lunch, haircuts, shines, cigarettes, newspapers, and magazines

—adds up to a heroic \$416 a year. Clothes for the whole family, including a new school outfit for Patsy, come to \$327—without including the new winter overcoats which Sue and Jeff need badly. The quota for doctor and dentist last year was \$68, the bill for essential drugstore items \$50.

Sue has always washed and ironed the family's personal laundry but had the heavier pieces done outside for \$7 a month or \$84 a year, including mangling of the flat pieces. Mangling went up 50c a week last spring, so now Sue does that ironing too. She's just decided to do all the washing at home as soon as she can scare up the first installment on a wash-

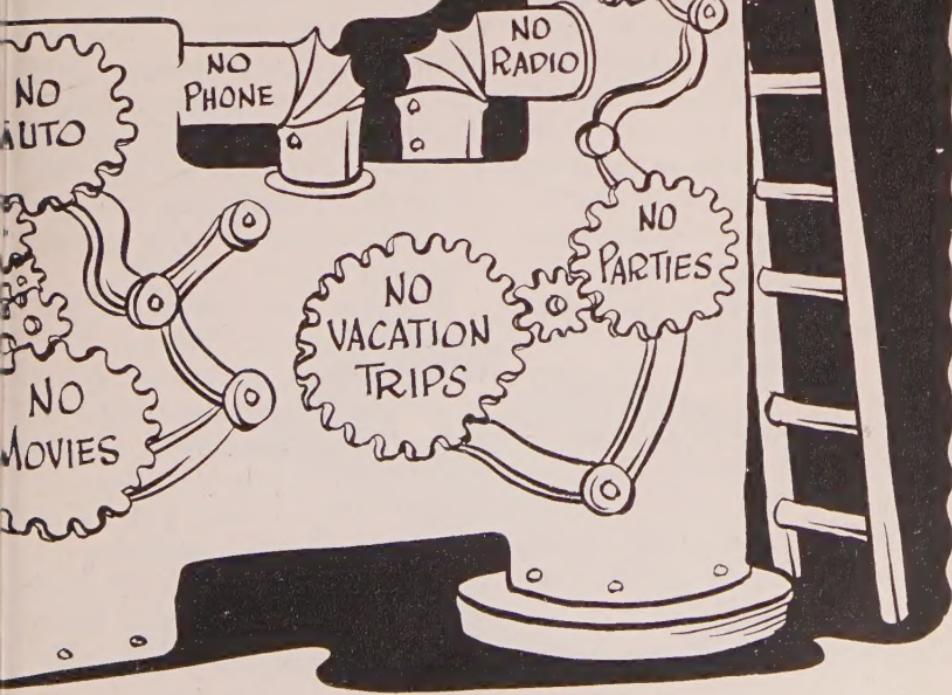


machine. This year they can't buy on less than \$40 at the dryers and \$17 at the shoe repair shop.

This brings the Logans down to remaining \$1,000—and they haven't eaten. Food prices have hit the hardest of all. When Sue and Patsy were married, their food budget was \$1 a day or \$365 a year. Recently as 1942, when Patsy about as much as she does now, fed three hungry mouths for a year. In 1945, the last full year of DPA, Sue's food budget was \$1. A year later it was \$605. In 1947, it figured out to \$950 and this is crock bottom.

Last year, Patsy began asking the pet which had been prom-

NO NUTHIN'!



ised her "as soon as you get old enough to take care of it." During the summer the terrier next door had pups, and Sue almost gave in when she saw how Patsy fondled them. But it costs money to feed a dog—and Patsy at eight was old enough to understand when the ASPCA truck rolled up next door.

The grocery receipts in one of Sue's kitchen drawers are more eloquent than charts. "Rib roast . . . 88c," "2 lbs. lamp chops . . . 65c," "6½ lbs. leg of lamb . . . \$2.40," "½ lb. butter . . . 23c," read bills picked at random from the 1942 envelope.

"The last time we had rib roast it cost \$2.25—last March I think it was." Occasions like that are remembered in the Logan household.

Till the cheaper meat cuts climbed almost as high as the choice ones, the Logans used to have a small pot roast of chuck meat or a lamb shank every other Sunday or so. Their meat standby is ground hamburger—not grilled as they prefer it, but cooked up in a "Scotch mince" with water, onions, flour, and gravy-mix. That way half a pound of hamburger can feed four people.

When they were first married, they would treat themselves to a sirloin for 75c—plenty if you ate a second baked potato. Today the same piece would cost a dollar more, and the butter to put on the potatoes about twice as much. Sue

isn't sure just how much butter does cost, it's been so long since they switched to oleomargarine.

Jeff used to be a great coffee drinker. "I didn't think I could start the day without two or three cups at breakfast," he reminisces with all the wistful pride of a reformed drunk. Sue got the A & P's Red Circle brand at two pounds for 31c then. Today two pounds cost 83c. The Logans switched to tea over a year ago.

Though Patsy still gets them, breakfast eggs at 87c a dozen and milk at 23c a quart are things of the past for Jeff and Sue. So are the snacks of cheese (70c a pound for cheddar) and the crackers and beer they used to enjoy in the kitchen before going to bed on a Saturday night. Stewed fruit has replaced fresh orange juice; turnips, carrots, and cabbage are unrelieved by asparagus, broccoli, and peas; and gone but not forgotten are ice cream, pie, and cake for dessert—except as a special treat for Patsy.

At lunch time downtown, Jeff misses something besides food value. Some of the junior officers at the bank who make a habit of eating in a near-by tavern recently invited Jeff to join the "gang"—dutch treat, of course. Jeff knows the value of such contacts in his job. But he also knows he can't afford the dollar or so that lunch with them would cost, even with-



out a cocktail. They don't ask him any more now. "They have too much tact," says Jeff.

Jeff's winter overcoat, a dark gray Chesterfield, is so worn around the cuffs and edges that he takes it off the minute he enters the bank building. Since summer he's been studying the newspaper ads and making the rounds of department stores looking for a bargain. "Honestly, you waste more on shoe leather than you'd save on the price," Sue tells him. But Jeff would feel awful if he paid \$45 for a coat and then saw the same thing for \$40 elsewhere.

While he was still just a clerk, Jeff was able to buy a new tie once in a while, something that picked up his morale for a week. Ties he used to buy on sale for 69c he can't find for less than \$1.50. Sue has been turning some of his old ties, just as she has always turned his frayed shirt col-

lars. Shirts he used to buy for \$1.98 can't be bought for less than \$4.50. For a week he passed a haberdashery displaying a shirt marked "Special \$4.25." When he finally walked in to buy it, the sale was over and the shirt back to \$4.50. Jeff walked out in a huff.

"Honestly, sometimes I feel like smashing my fist right through the glass," Jeff told Sue after a window-shopping expedition one Saturday afternoon. Instead, he flicked invisible dust off his pinstripe trousers, while Sue tried to think of something to say. "A man," she will tell you, "ought to have some way of busting loose every once in a while."

They tried it when Sue's kid brother got back from Japan last year. The Logans treated him and his girl to dinner at a flashy restaurant and drinks at one of the second-string night clubs, and it was a pretty dismal evening.



"Every drink rang a cash register in our minds," says Sue. "The waiters can spot you right away as a nonspender," says Jeff. "You don't know whether to give them a dollar bill or a sock on the jaw."

Even at home they don't see nearly as much of their friends as they'd like. It isn't possible to have them over to supper any more, and even if they come later, the Logans feel they should serve something to drink. The blended whiskey Jeff used before the war cost him around \$1.90 a fifth. Today it's \$4.35, and he's not having any.

Aside from worries about just living, it's the feeling of being left out of things that troubles the Logans most. During the summer, Sue and Jeff would like to see that Patsy got out in the country at least for a week or so. The best they can manage now is the crowded beach an hour's bus ride from home. All three of them put on their clothes over their suits and undress on the beach. After swimming they wait for their suits to dry off before dressing again. This is to save the 25c locker fee.

Naturally, the Logans can't afford to go anywhere during Jeff's two-week vacation. Jeff spends it doing odd jobs around the house, repairing furniture, painting floors, and helping take care of Patsy. It's always been an ambition of theirs to visit Yellowstone National Park, but they haven't

even been out of the city since 1942, the year gas rationing came in and they sold their car—a secondhand Chevrolet that Jeff had bought for \$385 just before they were married. When he bought it, you could still find eight gallons of gasoline for \$1. When he sold the car, they had hopes of buying a new one later on. They don't hope any more.

It's the same about a home of their own. Before the war they had their eye on a "one-family house," one of several hundred built exactly alike. It was only \$3,300 with \$500 down and the rest in monthly installments no larger than their rent. But Sue had her heart set on the kind of houses she saw in *House and Garden* and *House Beautiful*, and Jeff felt he was "going places" and could afford one some day.

They went on talking about their "dream house" till it became almost real. Then suddenly about a year ago they realized they would almost certainly never own a house of their own. This was at about the same time Sue and Jeff gave up the idea of another child.

When they were married, Sue and Jeff figured they'd have two or three children by now. But with things so uncertain after Pearl Harbor, they decided to wait. Jeff's draft number came up early but the doctors rejected him because of inguinal hernias. After the war,

they thought about children again, and Sue even saw her doctor.

Sooner or later, she learned, she'd have to have an operation for a small ovarian cyst—certainly before having another child. There was nothing very serious about it except the cost—around \$200. Later, when the child came, there'd be the expense of delivery and hospitalization—only \$75 for Patsy in 1939, at least \$200 with the same doctor today.

Even if they broke all their rules and succeeded in borrowing money without security, it would still be hard to maintain another child without denying something to Patsy. Though they might get by on space in their present apartment, they never know when suspension of rent controls might reduce them to a smaller place. If a depression forced down prices, it might also cost Jeff his job. The complete absence of savings and the modest size of Jeff's life insurance, \$3,000, is another big consideration. Then there are Jeff's parents—both old and barely able to manage on social security and a pension. So far they've only hinted they need help.

Without letting on even to Jeff, Sue tried putting away dimes in a jar she called the "Christmas Fund." This summer it rose as high as \$18. The sight of all that money gave Sue ideas. If she didn't use it for Christmas but let

it grow a couple of years, it might even pay for her operation.

She had forgotten, though, about the new winter outfit Patsy needed when school opened. Patsy had completely outgrown last year's re-made outfit. Because children put such store by Christmas, Patsy was given to understand that the new outfit was a kind of early Christmas present. She found other presents under the tree last month, but they were mostly the clothes that would have been bought anyway.

Sue and Jeff have given up things like birthday and anniversary presents for each other—almost, anyhow. When Jeff remarked the other day that neither of them had had a birthday present in two years, Sue corrected him: "Oh, yes, you have. What about that gold inlay?" It glinted cheerfully as Jeff laughed.

Hard up as they are, the Logans favor sending food to Europe. They don't see, though, why people in their income brackets should have to pay the check. "Higher prices just pass the buck to the people who have least," argues Jeff. "It ought to be shared like taxes—according to means."

Loyally Republican, both Jeff and Sue opposed the OPA while it was still in effect. Since then they've swung around completely in favor of price control. "Even black-market prices would seem

like a Godsend now," says Sue.

Like most Americans, the Logans like to feel they have "done better" than their parents and that their offspring in turn will have "advantages" they lacked. They'd like, for instance, to buy Patsy a piano and eventually move to "a better neighborhood"—but they don't see the slightest chance of doing either. Sue's father was a Baltimore police corporal. Jeff's father was a textile mechanic in Massachusetts. Now, with prices as high as they are, the gains Sue and Jeff have made in white-collar respectability seem more than offset by the rewards of skilled labor.

Many of the Logans' friends in the same income group have taken out their resentment on the same scapegoats that served Nazi Germany—labor unions, Jews, and Soviet Russia. This the Logans

have resisted, not for ideological reasons (they haven't any ideology), but because, as Jeff puts it, "That kind of stuff doesn't get you any place."

The Logans are still "sound"—far sounder at the moment than their dollars. Like our wartime civilians in uniform they gripe a good deal; and in today's prices they have plenty to gripe about. They aren't disturbed just by the prices of the things they buy in stores, but by the cost of a way of life long famous for its trademark: "Made in U.S.A."

The Logans have worked a long time to buy the article "as advertised." According to all the rules of free enterprise, they've earned it. You don't hold old customers indefinitely by raising the price just beyond their reach. The Logans are still sound, but—. END





CHOPPED

# BATTLE ROYAL

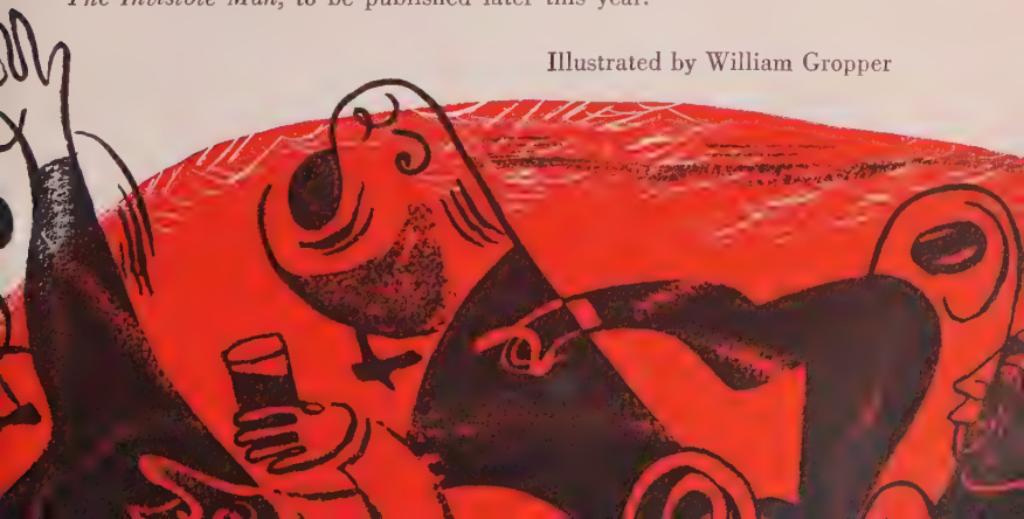
*A story by Ralph Ellison*

IT GOES a long way back, some twenty years. All my life I had been looking for something, and everywhere I turned, someone tried to tell me what it was. I accepted their answers, too, though they were often in contradiction and even self-contradictory. I was naive. I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I could answer.

And yet I am no freak of nature, nor of history. I was in the cards, other things having been equal (or unequal), eighty-five years ago. I am not ashamed of my grandparents for having been slaves. I am ashamed only of myself for having at one time been ashamed. About eighty-five years ago they were

**Ralph Ellison's** parents moved to the Southwest early in the century in the hope of escaping from the conditions of Negro life in the Southeast. After struggling through three years of college, he went north in the '30s and became a writer. This story will form part of his first novel, *The Invisible Man*, to be published later this year.

Illustrated by William Gropper



told that they were free, united with others of our country in everything pertaining to the common good, and, in everything social, separate like the fingers of the hand. And they believed it. They exulted in it. They stayed in their place, worked hard, and brought up my father to do the same. But my grandfather is the one. He was an odd old guy—my grandfather, and I'm told I take after him. It was he who caused the trouble. On his deathbed he called my father to him and said:

“Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country, ever since I give up my gun in the Reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yesses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open.”

**T**HEY THOUGHT the old man had gone out of his head. He had been the meekest of men. The younger children were rushed from the room, the shades drawn, and the flame of the lamp turned so low that it sputtered on the wick like the old man's breathing. “Learn it to the young 'uns,” he whispered fiercely. Then he died.

But my folks were more alarmed over his last words than over his dying. I was warned emphatically to forget it and, indeed, this is the first time it has been repeated outside the family circle. It had a tremendous effect upon me, however. I could never be sure of what he meant. Grandfather had been a meek old man who never made any trouble, yet on his deathbed he had called himself a traitor and a spy, and he had spoken of his meekness as a dangerous activity. It became a constant puzzle which lay unanswered in the back of my mind. And whenever things went well for me, I remembered my grandfather and felt guilty, and uncomfortable. It was as though I was carrying out his advice in spite of myself.

And to make it worse, everyone loved me for it, I was praised by the most lilywhite men of the town. I was considered an example of desirable conduct—just as my grandfather had been.

And what puzzled me was that the old man had defined it as treachery. When I was praised for my conduct I felt a guilt that in some way I was doing something that was really against the wishes of the white folks, that if they had understood they would have desired me to act just the opposite, that I should have been sulky and mean and that that would really have been what they wanted, even though they were fooled and thought they wanted me to act as I did. It made me very much afraid that some day they would look upon me as a traitor and I would be lost.

Still, I was afraid to act any other way because they didn't like that at all. The old man's words were like a curse. On my graduation day I delivered a paper in which I showed that humility was the secret, indeed, the very essence, of progress. (Not that I believed this. How could I, remembering my grandfather? I only knew that it worked.) It was a great success. Everyone praised me, and the school superintendent invited me to give the speech before the town's leading white citizens. It was a triumph for our whole community.

When I got there I discovered that it was on the occasion of a smoker, and I was told that since I was to be there anyway I might as well take part in the "battle royal" to be fought by some of my schoolmates as part of the entertainment. The battle royal came first. It was in the main ballroom of the leading hotel. All the town's big shots were there in their tuxedos, wolfing down the buffet foods, drinking beer and whisky and smoking black cigars. It was a large room with a high ceiling. Chairs were arranged in neat rows around three sides of a portable boxing ring. The fourth side was clear, revealing a gleaming space of polished floor. I had some misgivings over the battle royal, by the way. Not from a distaste for fighting, but because I didn't care too much for the other fellows who were to take part. They were tough guys, who seemed to have no grandfather curses worrying their minds. No one could have mistaken their toughness.

And besides, I suspected that fighting a battle royal might detract from the dignity of my speech. In those early days I

visualized myself as a neo-Booker T. Washington. But the other fellows didn't care too much for me, either, and there were nine of them. I felt superior to them in my way, and I didn't like the manner in which we were all crowded together into the servants' elevator. Nor did they like my being there. In fact, as the warmly lighted floors flashed past the elevator we had words over the fact that I, by taking part in the fight, had kept one of their friends out of a night's work.

We were led out of the elevator through a rococo hall into an anteroom and told to get into our fighting togs. Each of us was issued a pair of boxing gloves. Then we were told to go out into the ballroom and wait our turn. When ready we were ushered out, and entered the big, mirrored hall as instructed, looking cautiously about us, and whispering lest we might accidentally be heard in the noise of the room. It was foggy with cigar smoke. And already the whisky was taking effect. I was shocked to see that some of the most important men of the town were tipsy. They were all there—bankers, lawyers, judges, doctors, fire chiefs, teachers, merchants. Even one of the more fashionable pastors.

**S**OMETHING WE COULDN'T see was going on up front. A clarinet was vibrating sensuously and the men were standing up and moving forward. We were a small group, clustered together, our bare upper bodies touching and shining with anticipatory sweat; while up front the big shots were becoming increasingly excited over something we could not see. Suddenly I heard the school superintendent yell, "Bring up the shines, gentlemen! Bring up the little shines!"

We were rushed up to the front of the ballroom. It smelled strongly of tobacco and whisky, and when we were pushed into place I almost wet my pants. A sea of faces, some hostile, some amused, ringed round us, and in the center, facing us, stood a magnificent blonde—stark nude. There was dead silence. I felt a blast of cold air chill me. I tried to back away, but they were behind me and around me. Some of the boys stood with lowered heads, trembling. I felt a wave of irrational guilt and

fear. My teeth chattered, my skin turned to goose flesh, my knees knocked.

Yet I was strongly attracted and looked in spite of myself. Had the price of looking been blindness, I would have looked. The hair was yellow like that of a circus Kewpie doll, the face heavily powdered and rouged, as though to form an abstract mask, the eyes hollow and smeared a cool blue. I wanted at one and the same time to run from the room, to sink through the floor, to caress her and destroy her, to love her and murder her. I had a notion that of all those in the room she saw only me with her impersonal eyes.

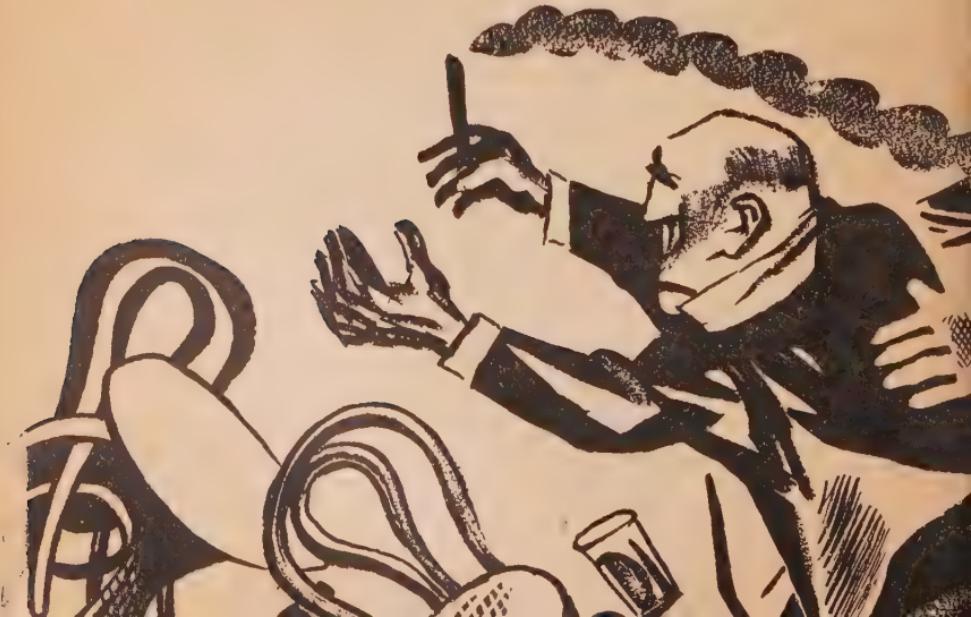
And then she began to dance, a slow sensuous movement, the smoke of a hundred cigars clinging to her like the thinnest of veils. She seemed like a fair bird-girl girdled in veils calling to me from the angry surface of some gray and threatening sea. I was transported. Then I became aware of a clarinet playing and the big shots yelling at us. Some threatened us if we looked and others if we did not. On my right I saw one boy faint and a man grab a silver pitcher from a table, step close as he dashed iced water upon him, then stand him up and force two of us to support him as his head hung and moans issued from his thick bluish lips. Another boy began to plead to go home. He was the largest of the group, wearing dark-red fighting trunks that were much too small.

And all the while the blonde continued dancing, smiling faintly at the big shots who watched her with fascination, and faintly smiling at our fear. I noticed a certain merchant who followed her hungrily, his lips loose and drooling. He was a large man who wore diamond studs in his shirtfront, which swelled with the ample pouch underneath, and each time the blonde swayed her undulating hips, he ran his hand through the thin hair of his bald head and, with his arms upheld, his posture clumsy like that of an intoxicated panda, wound his belly in a slow and obscene grind. This creature was completely hypnotized. The music had quickened. The dancer flung herself about with detached facial expression, the men began reaching out to touch her. I could see their beefy fingers sink

into the soft flesh. Some of the others tried to stop them, and she began to move around the floor in graceful circles as they gave chase, slipping and sliding over the polished floor. It was mad. Chairs went crashing, beer was spilt as they ran laughing and howling after her.

They caught her just as she reached a door, raised her from the floor, and tossed her as college boys are tossed at a hazing, and above her red, fixed-smiling lips I saw the terror and disgust in her eyes, almost like my own terror and that I saw in some of the other boys. They tossed her twice and her soft breasts seemed to flatten against the air and her legs flung wildly as she spun. Some of the more sober ones helped her to escape. And I started off the floor, heading for the anteroom with the rest of the boys.

Some were still half hysterical. But as we tried to leave we were stopped and ordered to get into the ring. There was nothing to do but what we were told. All ten of us climbed under the ropes and allowed ourselves to be blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth. One of the men seemed to feel a bit sympathetic and tried to cheer us up as we stood with our backs against the ropes. Some of us tried to grin. "See that boy over there?" one of the men said. "I want you to run across at the bell and give it to him right in the belly. If you don't get him,



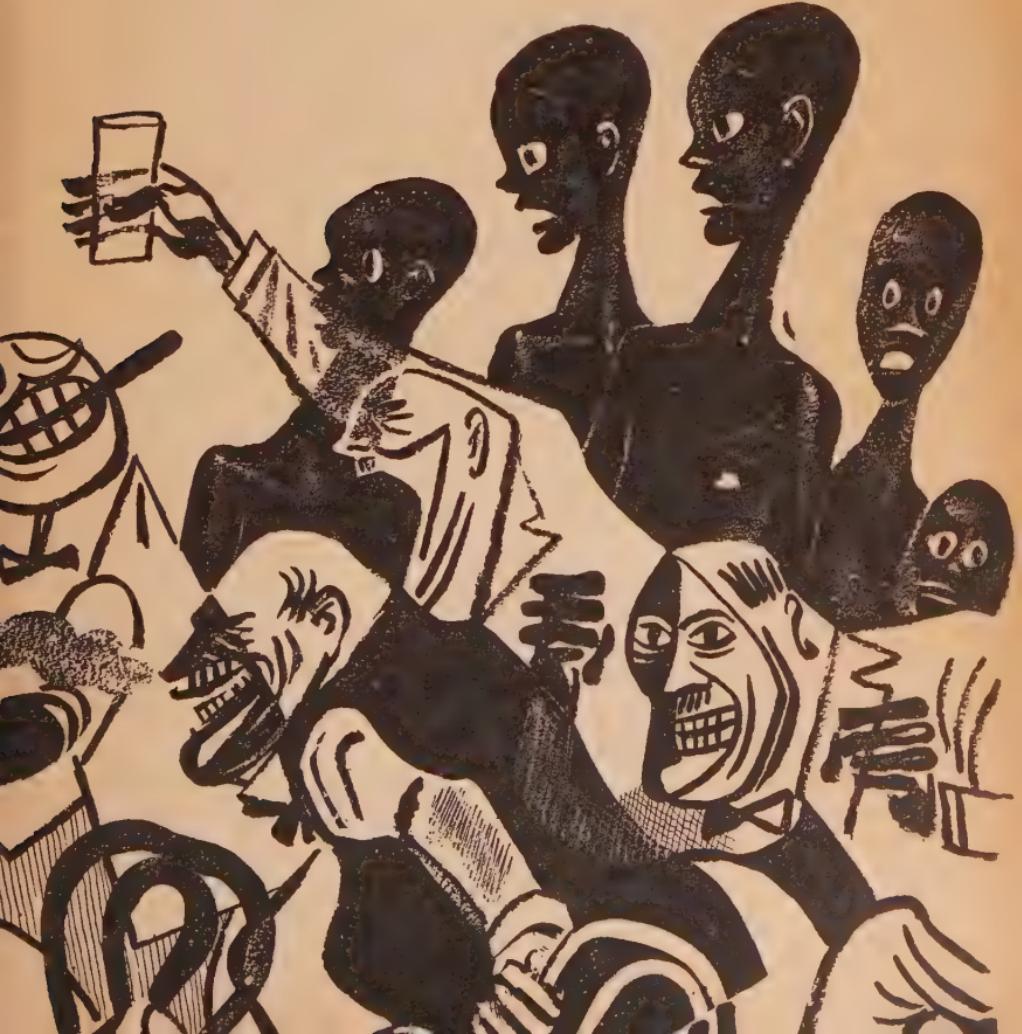
I'm going to get you. I don't like his looks." Each of us was told the same. The blindfolds were put on. Yet even then I had been going over my speech. In my mind each word was as bright as flame. I felt the cloth pressed into place and frowned so that it would be loosened when I relaxed.

But now I felt a sudden fit of blind terror. I was unused to darkness. It was as though I had suddenly found myself in a dark room filled with poisonous cottonmouths. I could hear the bleary voices yelling insistently for the battle to begin.

"Get going in there!"

"Let me at that big nigger!"

I strained to pick out the school superintendent's voice, as



though to squeeze some security out of that slightly more familiar sound.

"Let me at those black sonsabitches!" someone yelled.

"No, Jackson, no!" another voice yelled. "Here, somebody help me hold Jack."

"I want to get at that ginger-colored nigger—tear him limb from limb," the first voice yelled.

I stood against the ropes trembling. For I was what they called ginger-colored and the man sounded as though he might crunch me between his teeth like a crisp ginger cookie. Quite a struggle was going on. Chairs were being kicked about and I could hear voices grunting as with a terrific effort. I wanted to see, to see more desperately than ever before. But the blindfold was tight as a thick, skin-puckering scab, and when I raised my gloved hand to push the layers of white aside, a voice yelled, "Oh, no you don't, you black bastard! Leave that alone!"

"Ring the bell before Jackson kills him a coon!" someone boomed in the sudden silence. And I heard the bell clang and the sound of feet scuffling forward.

A glove smacked against my head. I pivoted, striking out stiffly as someone went past, and felt the jar ripple along the length of my arm to my shoulder. Then it seemed as though all nine of the boys had turned upon me at once. Blows pounded me from all sides while I struck out as best I could. So many blows landed upon me that I wondered if I were not the only blindfolded fighter in the ring, or if the man called Jackson hadn't succeeded in getting me after all.

Blindfolded, I sensed that I could not control my movements and that I had no dignity. I stumbled about like a baby or a drunken man. The smoke had become thicker and with each new blow it seemed to sear and further restrict my lungs. My saliva became like hot bitter glue. A glove connected with my head, filling my mouth with warm blood. It was everywhere. I could not tell if the moisture I felt upon my body was sweat or blood. A blow landed hard against the nape of my neck. I felt myself going over, my head hitting the floor. Streaks of

blue light filled the black world behind the blindfold. I lay prone, pretending that I was knocked out, but felt myself seized and yanked to my feet.

“Get going, black boy! Mix it up!”

My arms were like lead, my head smarting from blows. I managed to feel my way to the ropes and held on, trying to catch my breath. A glove landed in my mid-section and I went over again, feeling as though the smoke had become a knife jabbed into my guts. Pushed this way and that by the legs milling around me, I finally pulled erect and discovered that I could see. The blindfold had slipped a fraction and I could see the black, sweat-washed forms weaving in the smoky-blue atmosphere like drunken dancers weaving to the rapid drum-like thuds of blows. Everyone fought hysterically. It was complete anarchy. Three, four, fought one, then turned to fight each other, were themselves attacked. Blows landed below the belt and in the kidney, with the gloves open as well as closed.

MY EYE WAS PARTLY OPEN now and I did not feel so much terror. I moved carefully, avoiding blows, although not too many to attract attention, fighting from group to group. The boys groped about like blind, cautious crabs, crouching to protect their mid-sections, their heads pulled in short against their shoulders, their arms stretched nervously before them with their fists testing the smoke-filled air like the knobbed feelers of hypersensitive snails. In one corner I glimpsed a boy violently punching the air and heard him scream in pain as he smashed his hand against a ring post. For a second I saw him bent over, holding his hand, then going down as a blow caught his unprotected head.

I played one group against the other, slipping in and throwing a punch, then stepping out of range while pushing the others into the melee to take the blows blindly aimed at me. The smoke was agonizing and there were no rounds, no bells at three-minute intervals to relieve our exhaustion. The room spun round me, a swirl of lights, smoke, sweating bodies—surrounded by tense white faces. I bled from both nose and

mouth, the blood spattering from time to time upon my chest. The men kept yelling,

“Slug him, black boy. Knock his guts out!”

“Uppercut him. Kill that big boy!”

Taking a fake fall, I saw a boy going down heavily beside me as though we were felled by a single blow, saw a sneaker-clad foot shoot into his groin as the two who had knocked him down stumbled upon him while I rolled out of range.

The harder we fought the more threatening the men became. And yet I had begun to worry about my speech again. Would they recognize my ability? What would they *give* me?

I WAS FIGHTING automatically when suddenly I noticed that one after another of the boys was leaving the ring. I was surprised, filled with panic, as though I had been left alone with an unknown danger. Then I understood. The boys had arranged it among themselves. It was the custom for the two men left in the ring to slug it out for the winner's prize. I discovered this too late. When the bell sounded, two men in tuxedos leaped into the ring and removed the blindfold. I found myself facing Tatlock, the biggest of the gang.

I felt sick at my stomach. Hardly had the bell stopped ringing in my ears than it clanged again and I saw him moving swiftly towards me. Seeing nothing else to do, I hit him smash on the nose. He kept coming, bringing the sharp violence of rank sweat. His face was a black blank of a face, only his eyes alive—with hate of me, and aglow with a feverish terror from what had happened to us all. I became anxious, I wanted to deliver my speech and he came at me as though he meant to beat it out of me. I smashed him again and again, taking his blows as they came. Then on a sudden impulse I struck him lightly, and as we clinched, I whispered, “Fake like I knocked you out, you can have the prize.”

“I'll break your behind,” he whispered hoarsely.

“For them?”

“For me, sonofabitch!”

They were yelling for us to break it up and Tatlock spun

me half around with a blow, and as a joggled camera sweeps in a reeling scene, I saw the howling red faces crouching tense beneath the clouds of blue-grey smoke. For a moment the world wavered, unravelled, flowed, then my head cleared and Tatlock bounced before me. That fluttering shadow before my eyes was his jabbing left hand. Then, falling forward, my head against his damp shoulder, I whispered,

“I’ll make it five dollars more.”

“Go to hell!”

But his muscles relaxed a trifle beneath my pressure, and I breathed, “Seven!”

“Give it to your ma,” he said, ripping me beneath the heart. And while I still held him I butted him and moved away. I felt myself bombarded with punches. I fought back with hopeless desperation. I wanted to deliver my speech more than anything else in the world, because I felt that only these men could judge truly my ability, and now this stupid clown was ruining my chances. I began fighting carefully now, moving in to punch him, and out again with my faster speed. A lucky blow to his chin and I had him going too—until I heard a loud voice yell, “I got my money on the big boy.”

Hearing this I almost dropped my guard. I was confused: should I try to win against the voice out there? Would not this go against my speech, and was not this a moment for humility, for nonresistance? A blow to my head as I danced about sent my right eye popping like a jack-in-the-box and settled my dilemma. The room went red as I fell. It was a dream fall, my body languid and fastidious as to where to land, until the floor became impatient and smashed up to meet me. A moment later I came to. A hypnotic voice said “FIVE” . . . emphatically. And I lay there, hazily watching a dark spot of my own blood shaping itself into a butterfly, glistening and soaking into the soiled gray world of the canvas.

When the voice drawled “TEN” I was lifted up and dragged to a chair. I sat dazed. My eye pained and swelled with each throb of my pounding heart and I wondered if now I would be allowed to speak. I was wringing wet, my mouth still bleeding.

We were grouped along the wall now. The other boys ignored me as they congratulated Tatlock and speculated as to how much they would be paid. One boy whimpered over his smashed hand. Looking up front, I saw attendants in white jackets rolling the portable ring away and placing a small rug in the vacant space surrounded by chairs. "Perhaps," I thought, "I will stand on the rug to deliver my speech."

Then the M.C. called to us. My heart fell when he said, "Come on up here, boys, and get your money."

We ran forward to where the men laughed and talked in their chairs, waiting. Everyone seemed friendly now.

"There it is on the rug," the man said. I saw the rug covered with coins of all dimensions and a few crumpled bills. But what excited me, scattered here and there were gleaming pieces of gold.

"Boys, it's all yours," the man said. "That's right, Sambo," a blonde man said, winking at me confidentially.

I trembled with excitement, forgetting my pain. I would get the gold and the bills, I thought. I would use both hands. I would throw my body against the others to block them.

"Get down around the rug now," the man commanded, "and don't anyone touch it until I give the signal."

"This ought to be good," I heard.

We got around the square rug on our knees. Slowly the man raised his freckled hand and we followed it with our eyes.

I heard, "These niggers look like they're about to pray!"

Then, "Ready," the man said. "Go!"

I LUNGED FOR A YELLOW COIN lying on the blue design of the carpet, touched it and sent up a surprised shriek to join those rising around me. I tried frantically to remove my hand but could not let go. A hot violent force tore through my body, shaking me like a wet rat. The rug was electrified. The hair bristled up on my head as I shook myself free. My muscles jumped, my nerves jangled, writhed. But I saw that this was not stopping the other boys. Laughing in fear and embarrassment some were holding back and scooping up the coins

knocked off by the painful contortions of the others. The men roared above us as we struggled.

"Pick it up, goddamit, pick it up!" someone called like a bass-voiced parrot. "Go on, get it!"

I crawled rapidly around the floor, picking up the coins, trying to avoid the coppers and to get the greenbacks and the gold. Ignoring the shock by laughing, I brushed the coins off quickly, discovering that I could contain the electricity—a contradiction, but it works. Then the men began to push us onto the rug. Laughing embarrassedly, we struggled out of their hands and kept after the coins. We were all wet and slippery and hard to hold. Suddenly I saw a boy lifted into the air, glistening with sweat like a circus seal, and dropped, his wet back landing flush upon the electrically charged rug, heard him yell and saw him literally dance upon his back, his elbows beating a frenzied rhythm upon the floor, his muscles twitching like the flesh of a horse stung by many flies. When he finally rolled off, his face was gray, and no one stopped him when he ran from the floor amid booming laughter.

"Get that money," the M.C. called. "That's good, hard American cash!"

And we snatched and grabbed, snatched and grabbed. I was careful not to come too close to the rug now, and when I felt the hot whisky breath descend upon me like a cloud of foul air, I reached out and grabbed the leg of a chair. It was occupied, and I held on desperately.

"Leggo, nigger! Leggo!"

The huge face wavered down to mine as he tried to push me free. But my body was slippery and he was too drunk. It was Mr. Colcord, who owned a chain of movie houses and entertainment palaces. Each time he grabbed me I slipped out of his hands. It became a real struggle. I feared the rug more than I did the drunk, so I held on, surprising myself for a moment by trying to topple *him* upon the rug. It was such an enormous idea that I found myself actually carrying it out. I tried not to be obvious, yet trying to tumble him out of the chair I grabbed his leg. He raised up roaring with laughter, and, look-

ing me dead in the eye, kicked me viciously in the chest. The chair leg flew out of my hand and I felt myself going and rolling. It was as though I had rolled through a bed of hot coals. It seemed a whole century would pass before I would roll free, a century in which I was seared through the deepest levels of my body to the fearful breath within me, and the breath seared and heated to the point of explosion. "It'll all be over in a flash," I thought, as I rolled clear.

"All be over in a flash." But not yet. The men on the other side were waiting, red faces swollen as though from apoplexy as they bent forward in their chairs. Seeing their hands coming towards me I rolled away, as a fumbled football rolls off the receiver's fingertips, back into the coals. That time I luckily sent the rug sliding out of place and heard the coins ringing against the floor and the boys scuffling to pick them up and the M.C. calling, "All right, boys, that's all. Go get dressed and get your money."

I was limp as a dishrag. My back felt as though it had been beaten with wires. When we had dressed, the M.C. came in and gave us each five dollars, except Tatlock, who got ten for being last in the ring. Then he told us to leave. I was not to get a chance to deliver my speech, I thought. I was going out into the dim garbage-filled alley in despair when I was stopped and told to go back. When I returned, the men were pushing back their chairs and gathering in groups to talk. The M.C. knocked on a table for quiet.

**"G**ENTLEMEN," he said, "we almost forgot an important part of the program. A *most* serious part, gentlemen. This boy was brought here to deliver a speech which he made at his graduation yesterday . . ."

"Bravo!"

"I'm told that he is the smartest boy we've got out there in Milltown. I'm told that he knows more big words than a pocket-sized dictionary." Much applause and laughter.

"So now, gentlemen, I want you to give him your attention."

There was still laughter as I faced them. My mouth was dry,

my eye throbbing. I began slowly, but evidently my throat was tense, because they began shouting "Louder! Louder!"

I began again, tensing my diaphragm to project my voice, although it ached from the many blows to my solar plexus.

"We of the younger generation extol the wisdom of that great leader and educator," I shouted, "who first spoke these flaming words of wisdom: 'A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal: "Water, water: we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel came back: "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River.' And like him I say, and in his words, 'To those of my race who depend upon bettering their condition in a foreign land, or who undertake the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is his next-door neighbor, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded . . .'"

I spoke automatically and with such fervor that I did not realize the men were still talking and laughing until my dry mouth filling up with blood from the cut, almost strangled me. I coughed, wanting to stop and go to one of the tall brass sand-filled spittoons to relieve myself, but a few of the men, especially the superintendent, were listening, and I was afraid, so I gulped it down, blood, saliva, and all, and continued. What powers of endurance I had during those days! What enthusiasm! What a belief in the rightness of things! I spoke even louder in spite of the pain.

But still they talked and still they laughed as though with cotton in their dirty ears. So I spoke with greater emotional emphasis. I closed my ears and swallowed blood until I was nauseated. The speech seemed a hundred times as long as before, but I could not leave out a single word. All had to be said, each memorized nuance considered, rendered. Nor was that all. Whenever I uttered a word of three or more syllables a group

of voices would yell for me to repeat it. I used the phrase "social responsibility" and they yelled:

"What's that word you say, boy?"

"Social responsibility," I said.

"What?"

"Social . . ."

"Louder . . ."

"Responsibility."

"More!"

"Responsib—"

"Repeat!"

"—bility."

The room filled with the uproar of laughter until, no doubt distracted by having to gulp down my blood, I made a mistake and yelled a phrase I had often seen denounced in newspaper editorials, heard debated in private.

"Social . . ."

"What?" they yelled.

"Equality."

The laughter hung smokelike in the sudden stillness. I opened my eyes, puzzled. Sounds of displeasure filled the room. The M. C. rushed forward. They shouted hostile phrases at me. But I did not understand. A small, dry, moustached man in the front row blared out, "Say that slowly, son!"

"What, sir?"

"What you just said."

"Social responsibility, sir," I said.

"You weren't being smart, were you, boy?" he said, not unkindly.

"No, sir!"

"You sure that about 'equality' was a mistake?"

"Yes, sir," I said. "I was swallowing blood."

"Well, you had better speak more slowly so we can understand. We mean to do right by you, but you've got to know your place at all times. All right, now, go on with your speech."

I was afraid. I wanted to leave but I wanted also to speak, and I was afraid they'd snatch me down. "Thank you, sir," I

said, beginning where I had left off, and having them ignore me as before.

Yet when I finished there was thunderous applause. I was surprised to see the superintendent come forth with a package wrapped in white tissue paper, and gesturing for quiet, say:

“Gentlemen, you see that I did not overpraise this boy. He makes a good speech and some day he’ll lead his people and we will find him useful. And I don’t have to tell you that that is important in these days and times. This is a good, smart boy, and so to encourage him in the right direction, in the name of the Board of Education I wish to present him with a prize in the form of this . . .”

He paused, removing the tissue paper and revealing a gleaming calfskin briefcase.

“In the form of this first-class article from Shad Whitmore’s shop.

“Boy,” he said, addressing me. “Take this prize and keep it well. Consider it a badge of office. Prize it. Keep developing as you are and some day it will be filled with important papers that will help shape the destiny of your people.”

I was so moved that I could hardly express my thanks. A rope of bloody saliva drooled upon the leather, forming a shape like an undiscovered continent, and I wiped it quickly away. I felt an importance that I had never dreamed before.

“Open it and see what’s inside,” I was told.

My fingers atremble, I complied, smelling the fresh leather and seeing an official-looking document inside. It was a scholarship to the state college for Negroes. My eyes filled with tears and I ran awkwardly off the floor. I was overjoyed. I did not even mind when I discovered that the gold pieces I had scrambled for were brass pocket tokens advertising an automobile.

When I reached home everyone was excited. Next day the neighbors came to congratulate me. I even felt safe from my grandfather, whose deathbed curse usually spoiled my triumphs. I stood beneath his photograph with my briefcase in hand and smiled triumphantly into his stolid, black, peasant’s face. It was a face that fascinated me. The eyes seemed to fol-



low everywhere I went. That night I dreamed I was at a circus with him and that he refused to laugh at the clowns no matter what they did, then later he told me to open my briefcase and read what was inside and I did, finding an official envelope stamped with the state seal and inside the envelope another and another, endlessly, until I thought I would fall of weariness.

"Them's years," he said. "Now open that one," and I did and in it I found an engraved document containing a short message in letters of gold: "Read it," my grandfather said. "Out loud!"

"To Whom it May Concern," I intoned. "Keep This Nigger-Boy Running."

I awoke with the old man's laughter ringing in my ears. END



*Pre-print*

## THE ANGRY DUCKLING

She liked the opera of the barnyard fowls, the dry cackle of the hens, the soft complaint of ducklings eyeing the ponds like sailors fearful of sudden squalls, themselves of big nomadic turtles. Remember her heroic (to the barnyard) act when she heard one scream, how she ran into the pond to her waist and lifted a terrified duckling right out of the mouth of one of these horrors, "Darling duck; I am coming; I will save you!" It flattened its duck bill into her neck, tickling her; scrambled up into her hair, weeping, explaining, still trying to get away, living it over and over; poor little duck. Finally it went to sleep, but its foot was chewed completely off, forever after a duck who couldn't understand, who disliked his mother, couldn't hold his friends; making only semi-circular spirals in his travels, frowning and selfconscious, often angry.

—**Maude Phelps Hutchins**

From "Georgiana", to be published this spring by New Directions.

# Priestley Worries America —and Winston Churchill

In *You Worry the World* ('47 October) J. B. Priestley, the famous British novelist, playwright, and social critic, declared that if he didn't know America well (he has visited the U. S. regularly and lived in the Southwest), he would now dislike and mistrust America and Americans. In particular, he criticized America's patronizing attitude toward British Socialism, the spiritual emptiness of the lives of most Americans, and our deluging Europe with our worst books ("a Niagara of piffle") and sensational movies.

The response was immediate and widespread. In an address delivered by radio-telephone to a New York audience, Winston Churchill urged Americans to pay no attention to the "many insulting things which are said about the United States by the Communists and crypto-Communists and fellow travelers in our island," and then added: ". . . for instance, I noticed in the newspaper bitter words from a Mr. Priestley, who gained some acceptance in the war from the fact that we used him for broadcasting purposes. He has no influence. No American should allow himself to be irritated or offended by such diatribes. They do not represent in the slightest degree the feeling of the British nation, or I may say, of His Majesty's government."

That America did, however, pay a good deal of attention to Mr. Priestley's diatribe was immediately evident in '48's mail. A cross section from readers' reactions follows:

**Sirs:**

This Priestley piece . . . was a set sermon which every visiting or dollar-seeking Englishman delivers. "Going to Ameddica. Dear?" "Rather. Where's that lecture A-23?" "Oh, I say, you're going to make piles, aren't you?" It might have been delivered by Gray, Balfour, Keynes, the senior or the very junior Churchill. . . . Give the Americans a caviar of flattery to begin, hit them with the flat side of the salmon entree, send them away with a bit of sweets at the end.

He says that working with America is like being locked in a house with "an amiable, drunken giant." Well, working with Britain is like being locked in a closet with a demented midget—who picks fights with everyone in sight and then runs for

shelter to the giant. "You can't hit me, my brudder will fix you." Britain worries me . . .

*Encino, Cal.*

Richard G. Hubler

*Sirs:*

You are right to be anxious, Mr. Priestley. The very fact that most Americans would not understand your anxiety indicates how serious the situation is. But, although the majority are complaisant, thinking Americans worry with you. . . . Keep your faith strong, Mr. Priestley, because America has much to offer that has not been given the opportunity to mature. There is a native intelligence that may some day take the lead . . .

*Bristol, Conn.*

M. J. Raffel

*Sirs:*

Mr. Priestley's article made me sizzle with rage. Such patronizing condescension . . . Why should we give Englishmen ideas, culture, etc? They should be giving it to us if they are so superior. When he thinks we aren't happy, he is nuts.

*Reno, Nev.*

Florence Byars

*Sirs:*

It often appears to Americans that the cumulative effect of our press and celluloid exports is degrading in the extreme; we are therefore pleased and heartened to receive indication that this smoke screen is not totally opaque. . . . The newspapers here are flooded with invective and innuendo directed against British Socialism and linked with anticredit venom. It is urgent that Mr. Priestley's message be repeated and reinforced.

*Detroit*

George E. Marcia, Jr.

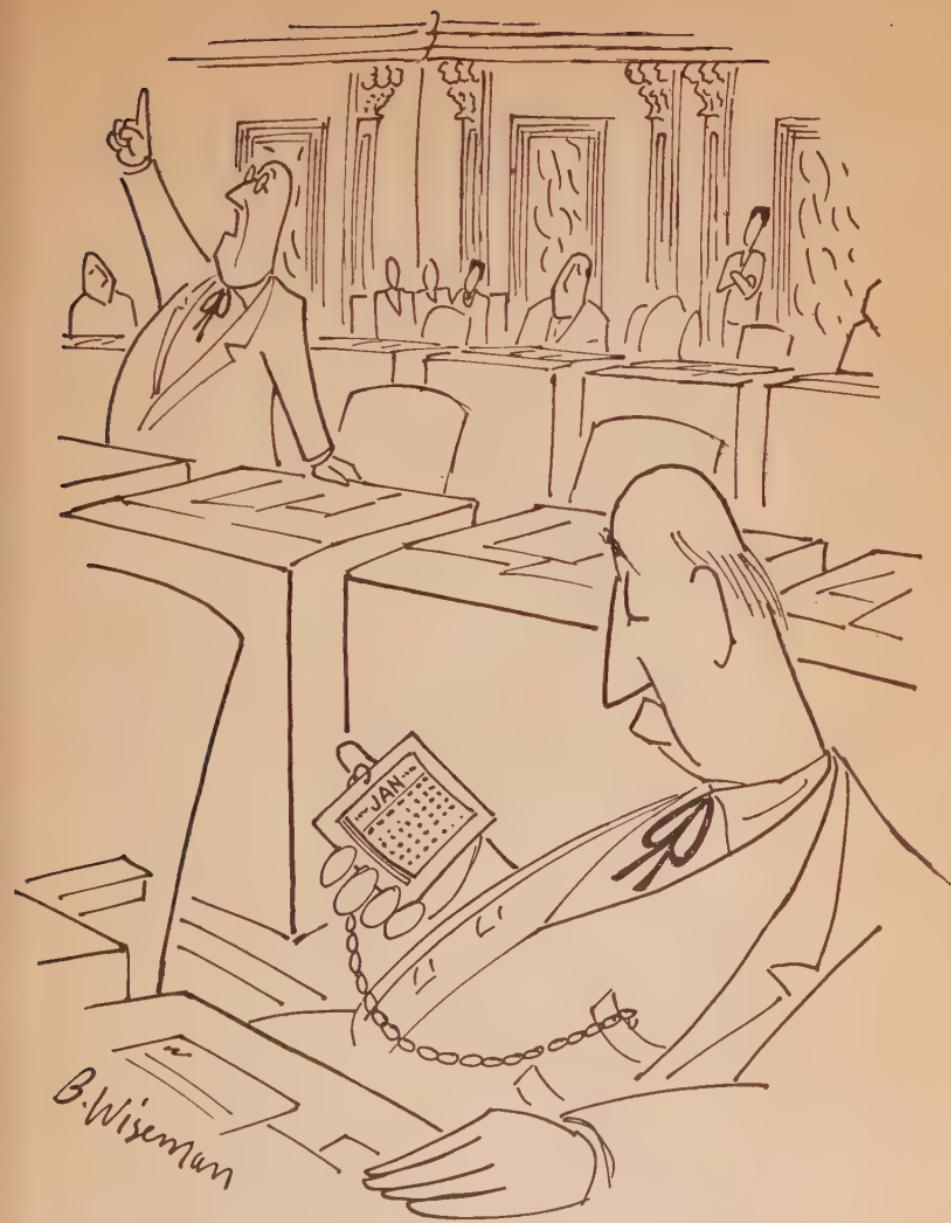
Mr. Priestley's answer to Mr. Churchill, according to a London story copyrighted by the *Chicago Sun* and *PM*, was:

"I am a writer. My chief object has been to try to show one or two tiny beams of light through the appalling fog of misunderstanding that exists today.

"You have in the world today the American capitalist system and the Soviet Communist system. Between the two, there is British Socialism which shares many deep-rooted political traditions with America but, because it is a form of Socialism, sooner or later should reach an understanding with Soviet Communism. Britain can therefore serve as a kind of bridge, a link between these two great opposing systems. Anybody who misinterprets the character of British Socialism is wilfully destroying any chance of there being such a bridge.

"That is why I say people like myself are right and people like Churchill are wrong."

END



# Wham! Zing! Zowie!

How comic books, like the movies,  
stay pure, heroic, and successful

By William A. Lydgate

IT IS THE FASHION to denounce comic books as cheap, vulgar, shocking, and a waste of time. But since 35,000,000 copies are sold each month and more than 90 per cent of America's children between the ages of six and eleven read them (some youngsters consuming as many as twelve to fifteen books), it is worth taking a closer look at the way they are produced and at the efforts of some producers to raise the level of what might be called the wham!—zing!—zowie! school of literature.

Despite the seeming childishness of the product, the amount of editing and hard work that goes into the continuity and drawing of many of the books, even when the

**William A. Lydgate**, editor of the Gallup Poll, has long maintained very close contact with four regular consumers of comic books, his children.

panels portray nothing more significant than a *WHACK!* or a *ZOOM!* is surprising. A good example is provided by the output of the Premium Service Company of New York. Operating in a large barnlike office in a warehouse district, Premium issues four monthly comic books and one bimonthly (*Blue Bolt*, *Frisky Fables*, *Young King Cole*, *Target Comics*, and *4-Most*), whose guaranteed total circulation is 1,700,000 a month.

All writers and artists who work for Premium are given copies of a set of ten rules (opposite page) which they are supposed to follow. These rules provide a good picture in miniature of the editorial formulas and philosophy of the kind of wham-zing literature that is intended to be successful without being dreadful.

Conscious of the very considerable influence their products can

## THE RULES

1. The end does not justify the means. Heroes should not flagrantly violate laws of morality, even for a worthy cause.
2. No incentives toward child delinquency. Cut no patterns for petty crime. Don't show small children shoplifting or breaking into houses. Minimize the use of Mickey Finns, drugs, or knockout drops. Whenever dope smuggling is referred to, avoid scenes showing addict using drugs. Never show any happy result from drugs, even temporarily. Picture the entire dope business as despicable. Avoid everything which might remotely suggest that young people might find drinking pleasant.
3. Crimes must not pay. EVERY evil-doer must either receive punishment or be slated for punishment.
4. Suggestiveness. Avoid suggestive drawings. This doesn't mean that we must be prudish about bathing suits, etc. Use common sense. When in doubt, stay on the safe side.
5. Don't ridicule institutions or officials. Policemen, judges, officials, respected institutions must not be portrayed as stupid or ineffective in a way to weaken respect for established authority.
6. Death inflicted by a hero. Our heroes generally should not directly effect deaths of villains. No matter how despicable a villain Dick Cole may meet, for example, Dick should not kill him. Let his own machinations bring about his death, or let him go down in conflict with established authority.
7. Avoid torture scenes, especially if children are involved.
8. Gruesome scenes, mutilation. Steer away from blood scenes. If a criminal is killed by a bullet, the wound may be marked with a small red spot. No splashes of gore.
9. "Supermortal" heroes. Deal carefully with all "super" material. Avoid portraying any hero as a demigod.
10. Avoid name of Deity and by-words. Taboo such ejaculations as "Gawd-a-mighty," "Jeepers Cripes." Try not to use such expressions as "Holy Cow" or "Holy Cats." Avoid exclamatory remarks which small children may copy to the distress of their parents.

*Code for comic books: These rules oddly resemble the edicts of Hollywood's Johnston office*

have on youthful minds, a number of comic book publishers have drawn up similar *do's* and *don'ts*, and a movement is in progress in the industry to set standards to which all will adhere. Premium is one of the most active in this movement.

Comic books are prepared in four stages. First comes a one-page synopsis of the story, then a panel-by-panel continuity, or script, which is carefully worked over and edited. This is next translated into rough drawings, which are edited again before final drawings and lettering are made for reproduction in color.

The examples that follow are from Premium's most popular comic, *Dick Cole*, which concerns a seventeen-year-old star student and athlete at Farr Military Academy. Dick has all the heroic attributes of Frank Merriwell. The action centers around the Farr campus, which has recently been destroyed by fire and is now being rebuilt. Here is the synopsis of the latest adventure:

The opening of the big new gym is being celebrated by a basketball game against Holden Academy, Farr's chief rival. But everything in the new gym goes wrong. A floorboard springs up on the basketball court during the game. The basket hoop falls off the backboard. When the crowd jeers, plaster from the ceiling showers down

on their heads. The game is called off.

As Dick Cole goes to the dressing room, he is surprised to see Joe Gubb, one of the construction foremen, being congratulated by a tall smiling stranger. Dick, wondering why these two are so happy, listens behind a pile of pipes stacked among the building supplies. He hears Gubb being paid off for sabotaging the new gym.

The two conspirators spy Dick, and the stranger shoves one of the pipes against Dick's head, knocking him out. (See drawing.) They stuff his limp body into one of the pipes and roll stones against the opening.

But Dick comes to, and takes the lead in running down the foul plot against Farr Academy. It turns out that the smiling stranger is a contractor named Lathem from a neighboring town whose bid to build the new campus had been rejected. The vengeful contractor and the traitorous Gubb are brought to justice. The basketball game against Holden Academy is played and Farr celebrates by winning.

Next comes one page of the continuity. This describes the action and dialogue of the episode in which Dick Cole is knocked out. The dialogue in Panel 1 was challenged by Premium's managing editor, Jane S. Nye because it violated Rule 5 in ridiculing the "respected institution" of the police. Her corrections were incorporated

CONTINUITY

Panel 1. Lathem shoves the pipe hard.

Lathem: I'll give him an earful! Those dumb cops'll never have gumption enough to get me.

Panel 2. Pipe strikes Dick on side of head.

Sound: Thud!

Panel 3. Gubb and Lathem standing over kayoed Dick.

Narration: A moment later...

Lathem: He's out cold!

Gubb: He knows I'm mixed up with this jerry-built gym! We've got to keep him out of the way until I leave town... But how?

Panel 4. Lathem dragging Dick toward a wide pipe big enough for Dick to fit into.

Lathem: I know. Help me stuff him in here.

Based on an approved story synopsis, every K. O. and thud is carefully written down panel-by-panel

in the artist's sketch (next page).

The next step is making rough drawings of the continuity. These are usually done in pencil.

The editor's comments on both words and drawings are reproduced on the following page. She had a great deal to say about those drawings—especially about the violation of two editorial rules in panels 3 and 6.

Editor Nye also attached this note: "Production chief: Please use 'jerry-built' in Q. and A." The "Q. and A." refers to an educational question at the bottom of the page, and the answer printed on the next page. The question and answer in this instance were:

Q. Does jerry-built mean strong, flimsy, or built by someone named Jerry?

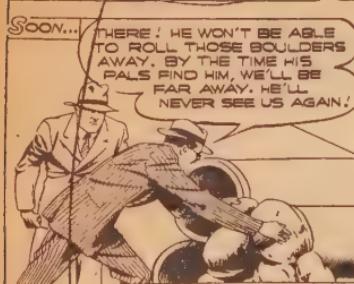
A. Jerry-built means flimsy, poorly constructed.

After all corrections are made, the pencil drawing is then "inked in" by the artist and given a further editorial scanning. This black-and-white drawing, on Bristol board, is then sent to the engraver accompanied by a color guide. The colors are inserted mechanically. On page 41 is a reproduction of the color guide, showing the completed page much as it will appear in the Premium comic book entitled *Blue Bolt* that goes on sale next month.

# DICK COLE



A MOMENT LATER ...



(5)

Yow! Take out the gore. Violation of rule 8.

Delete "Jeepers Cripes!" Violates rule 10. Substitute "Wow!" This is bad - check up on writer.

The editor is happy and Dick Cole zings off the presses . . .

You've left stripes off Latherin's suit. See panels 3, 4, 5 and fix.

Reverse Dick's position. Pipe should be pushed from l. to r. same as in panel 1.

Since pipe not shown, change balloon to read: "I know. Let's stuff him into one of those big pipes over there."

The artist's first rendering from the "continuity" gets an editorial going-over

# DICK COLE

I'LL GIVE HIM AN EARFUL HE DOESN'T WANT.



A MOMENT LATER...



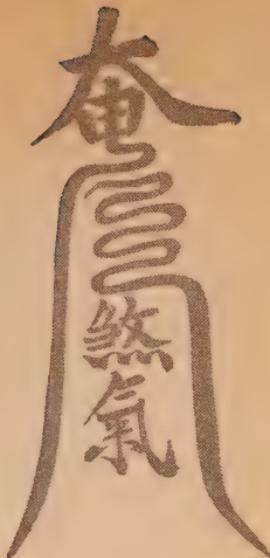


Illustrations by Howard Willard

# SMOKE

*Life and death in a Chinese hut*

A story by Robert Payne



ONLY A SINGLE farmer's cottage showed on the horizon. It was dusk and the stars were coming out one by one. I had no lantern, but I could see the raised and water-soaked roads between the rice fields.

There was a light showing through paper windows, and a small column of blue-gray smoke rose above the roof. I was hungry by this time and walked more quickly. There are always strange shadows on the rice fields at night; and herons and egrets rise with astonishing speed and a great flutter of wings.

All the time I thought of the Chinese peasants who were eating in the mud cottage on the horizon. The square of the window grew brighter. I could see the wind winnowing smoke so that it resembled a mushroom with frayed edges against the steel-dark night. After a while I saw some small stunted cypresses and heard a pig grunting. Then suddenly I was in the muddy courtyard.

I expected to see the herd boys drumming on their two-stringed violins, and perhaps an old farmer sitting on a stone

**Robert Payne** is the "Niagara of literature," six of whose seventeen completed books of fiction, philosophy, history, and translation appeared during 1947. See Annalee Jacoby's Author-Review in '47 November.

and looking at the stars, or perhaps even a great coffin surrounded by candles, with a priest praying and ringing little bronze bells. But the courtyard was deserted, the cottage door was shut, and there was only a greasy sow half buried in mud, grunting.

I waited for a little while and then knocked on the door. The column of blue smoke was still drifting from the roof. I could smell food being cooked and I could hear people moving, not talking. I do not know why, but once again I imagined a coffin supported on trestles and an old man in clean blue clothes and a long beard lying inside it with his eyes closed and his hands neatly folded across his sunken chest: and because he was an old man who had passed through seventy summers and winters, there would be rejoicing and not sorrow over his death, and there would be red silk hanging at the side of the coffin—not the white of mourning.

I knocked again; I could hear women's voices whispering, and perhaps the sound of a dog moving over the beaten earth



floor. And then the door was opened so suddenly by a young girl that I was blinded for a moment by the candlelight which shone from a long blackwood table in the center of the room. I thought it was a table, but in reality it was a coffin, and the girl moved backward a little and the dog started barking.

After a pause I went into the small room, bowing and saying that I was a foreigner who had got lost and would be grateful if they could put me up for the night. I would pay them well. I patted my pockets to show that I carried no weapons, and the children suddenly bounced up from the plank bed covered with straw and ran toward me, smiling and looking now at the strange hat I wore and now at the thick-soled American boots which were laced up to my knees. There are few things so beautiful as Chinese children in candlelight, and there were at least six of them. They were not dressed for mourning. The boys wore short blue trousers, and the girls wore long red trousers. It was summer, and the stench from the coffin was sickening, and yet no one seemed to notice it.

On the small earthenware stove they were cooking fish, mushrooms, and red peppers. From the roof, strings of red pepper pods hung down, swaying in the draft from the fire. At one end of the room lay the family altar with its scrolls, which were once painted in gold leaf on red paper, but which now were shabby and torn and covered with soot. A portrait of an old man looked down at me from the family altar.

The girl who had opened the door was about eighteen, beautiful in the dark coat and trousers, which contrasted with her bright red face. She had been weeping and feeding a baby, for I could see the coat half open. She said nothing.

There was an old woman by the fire whose face caught the upward gleam of the coals in the stove. She rose and said: "I will give you food, but there is nowhere for you to sleep." I said I would sleep on the floor, or perhaps they could give me straw and let me sleep outside. There were no men in the room. There was the old woman and there was another woman who lay in bed with her face covered by one of those blue silken quilts which are used for carrying very young children. I could

hear her uneasy breathing. There were the children, ranging from perhaps thirteen to the baby who lay in a cradle by the fire, a cradle which was exactly like one of those baskets in which we keep kittens. And the baby was hardly larger than a kitten, quite naked and with the red face of a child who had only just come into the world.

I knew the baby belonged to the girl who opened the door, who now stood in front of me, her lovely face catching the gleams from the charcoal fire. She did not offer me a chair. She seemed not to be surprised by my presence—perhaps nothing ever surprised her.

**T**HE THICK RED CANDLES flickered against the wall, and when I turned my head I noticed why one of the children was crying. My own shadow on the wall resembled a huge black eagle swooping down on the small room.

I moved into another position where I cast no shadow, and bowed again to the old woman sitting by the earthenware stove. I had expected to come into a house where there were men, and I was a little uneasy at the presence of the girl.

“Where have you come from?” the girl asked.

I mentioned the name of a town perhaps twenty miles away.

“And you have walked all the way?” she asked. “It must have taken many days.”

“I left there this morning.”

“My husband has gone to that place. I received a letter from him once.”

The old woman looked up.

“Perhaps he has news of your husband,” she said, and she leaned forward, looking like an old witch in the candlelight and the red gleam from the fire.

The fishes had turned brown, and I was beginning to forget the smell from the coffin.

“Perhaps he has news of your husband,” the old woman repeated eagerly.

I shook my head. “Are there no men here?” I asked.

At once I was sorry I had spoken, for they immediately

looked frightened, and the old woman began speaking in hurried whispers to the girl. All the time no one paid any attention to the sick woman who lay on the bed or to the dead man in the coffin. The girl picked up her baby, opened her coat wide, and began to feed it.

They said nothing. It was as though I had become a part of the furniture, and in desperation I sat down wearily and spoke to the children. They were bright-eyed and their bodies were very clean, sunburnt, and fresh, smelling a little of rice straw. They did not look starved, but none of them was well-fed; and perhaps this is what gave them so much grace of beauty, a kind of languor. One played with a wax doll, which had bright yellow hair and pink cheeks. It was marked: *Made in America.*

The young girl was attempting to feed the doll, and she would lay it against her small bony chest and stroke the bright yellow hair and see that the doll's mouth touched the faint nipples. She was shy, and kept away from me, but the other children came closer, with that curious sly movement of children who are fascinated and yet afraid in the presence of strangers.

I told them stories of foreign countries and of the great capital of China in the north and of the other capital which stood on a bare white rock at the confluence of two rivers. They were melting gradually.

Silently, still clutching the baby, the girl came and brought a small bowl filled with fish and laid it at my side.

One by one the children went to sleep. It was no more than eight o'clock, but in the country farmers sleep at sunset, and these children and the old woman and the young girl were all farmers. I couldn't understand why there were no men there, but later in the evening, when the candles were growing dim, the girl brought a blackwood stool and sat opposite me, staring at me for a long time before she could summon the courage to speak.

"Have you really been to these places?" she said. "I heard you talking to the children."

"Yes, I have been there. I write about the Chinese war for foreign newspapers."



She sighed. "The foreigners are not helping us. Perhaps the war will go on forever." She nodded in the direction of the coffin. "He said that there have been many long wars in the history of the Middle Kingdom."

"That is true," I said.

**T**HREE YEARS AGO there was no longer any fear in her eyes. "Two years ago they came for my man. He did not want to fight the war. They bound him with ropes at his ankles and on his hands and carried him away. There was only the old man, and two days ago he died. We have no men left in the house. I have only once heard from my man. He wrote a letter—"

From the pocket of her coat she took out a letter which was crumpled and no longer easy to read. She showed it to me without a word, and I read slowly and with difficulty his instructions to her—how he wanted his two children to be brought up, and how he prayed that there would be a boy, and how she should plant the winter rye, and how she was to worship his own mother and father, obeying them implicitly.

Reading those almost illegible strokes on the crumbling paper, it was easy enough to realize the intensity of that boy's love for the girl. She smiled briefly when I put the paper back in her hands. He had left more than eighteen months before, and there was that small child who could hardly have been more than a few months old. I wondered whose child it was, and suddenly she pointed to the baby and said: "It is not mine, for the mother died. Yet I must have a child in memory of my man."

I imagined the possibilities: Someone had passed, another traveler arriving at night. In her grief and loneliness, and perhaps not telling the old man, she had gone to a neighboring village and asked whether there were any children she could adopt. Or perhaps it was her own child by another man. She could not have been more than eighteen, but in China young girls often have children when they are sixteen, and she looked strong.

It grew late. There were three beds arranged against the wall. There was the bed on which her mother was dying, there was the bed on which, until recently, the old grandmother lay with the man now lying dead in the coffin, and there was the bed which was now crowded with the six children who lay in each others' arms.

The girl climbed into the bed where the children lay. It was very hot. She turned to the wall, removed her coat, and I could see the long black braids of her hair falling down her smooth back, and I could hear the suckling of the child. She had dark almond eyes curving toward the sides, and there was a great elegance in her movements. I dozed on



my stool. The old grandmother was still crouching over the fire.

I do not know how much time passed before I awoke. It was still dark, for only one of the candles remained alight and the earthenware stove had long since gone out. Suddenly it occurred to me that I should pay my respects to the old man who lay so close to me. I peered into the coffin, and what was strange is that he was exactly as I had expected. I could make out dimly the long beard and the long oval face which was shaped like the girl's. In the face was an expression of perfect peace, a release from toil.

Afterwards I must have dozed. When I woke up, the dawn was coming in through the red paper windows, the girl had turned over on her side and the old grandmother had fallen forward a little, so that her head lay directly above the burnt-out coals. I could no longer hear the girl's mother breathing under the blue quilt.

The dawn was terrible at first. Everything in the small mud room assumed the colors of harshness. The light crept over the naked limbs and chests of the children, turning them dead white; yet they slept contentedly. I buried my face in my hands, too weary to slip out of the room.

I wanted to see the girl again. All the beauty which I have seen in China was somehow concentrated on her sleeping face, the long curving eyelids and the bare shoulders gently heaving under the impulsion of her quiet breath. The light grew stronger. There came a time when the room suddenly became focused, recognizable, and then I noticed how clean it was. A cool wind came through the rafters and the pepper pods began swinging.

The girl woke up slowly, glanced at me, and smiled. She put on her coat, crawled slowly out of bed without disturbing the children, and began to light the fire with kindling wood after first gently lifting the old grandmother and helping her to bed.

From time to time she would look at me. She said nothing. She took some red spills from the altar. Lighting them so that the room was suddenly filled with their fragrance, she went to the door, opened it, and bowed three times in the direction of

the sun with the spills cupped in her hands. Then she returned, cut down some of the swinging pepper pods from the roof and began to cut some meat on a board which was stained a deep red. Some rice was boiling over the stove. She listened, then went outside to fetch water from the well. When she returned she picked up the baby and fed it with a few grains of wet rice which she scooped from the pan.

A moment later it lay nuzzling against her breast. One by one the children went out of doors, and even the old grandmother awoke and rubbed her wrinkled eyes. Flooding through the open door came the sunlight.

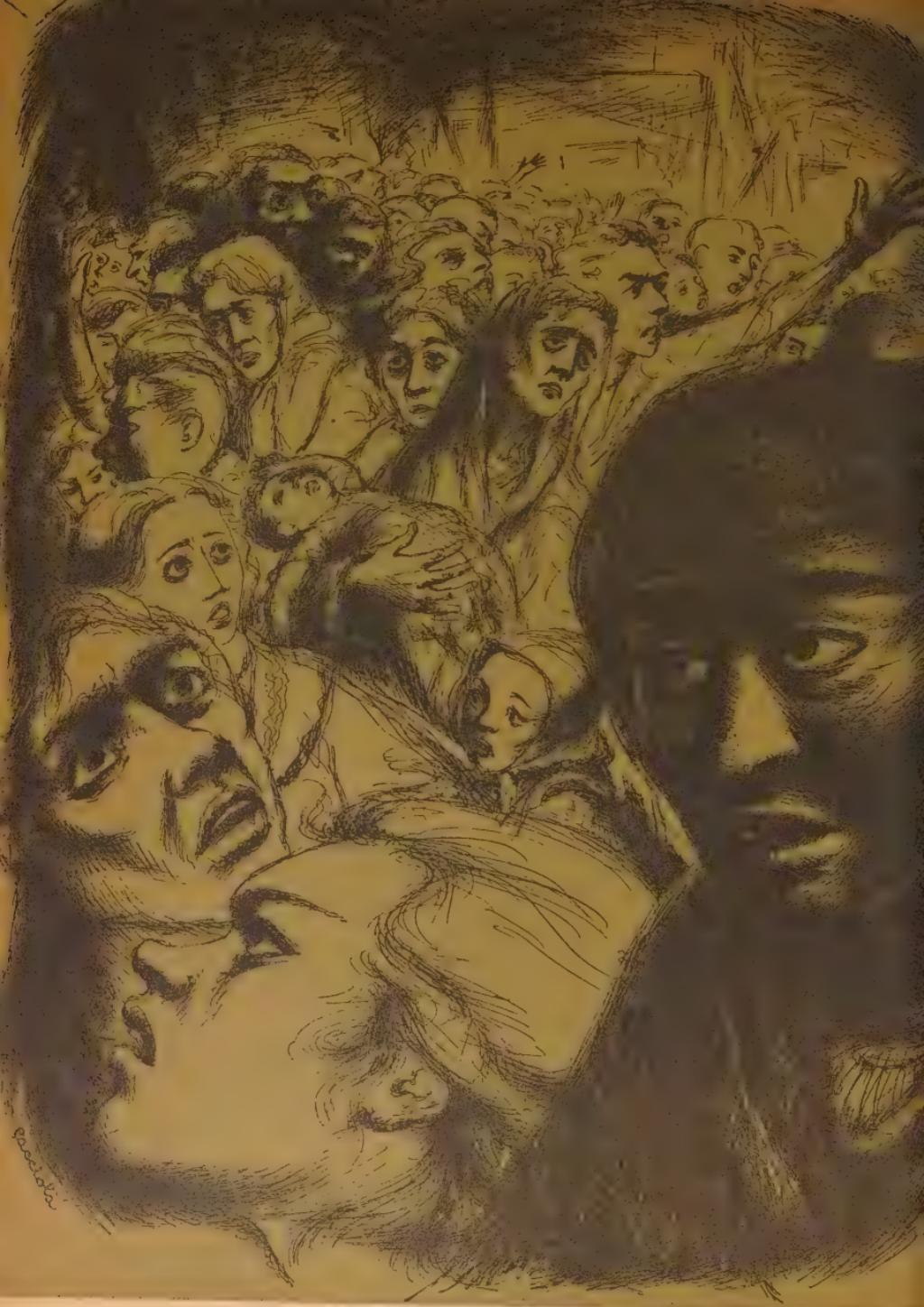
I ate the rice the girl offered me, and then went to the door. It was a perfect morning. I have never seen the young shoots of rice so green. It was time to go, but I hated leaving and delayed a little longer, often gazing at the girl in the stained coat as she walked barefooted on the beaten-earth floor. She would bow a little when she passed the coffin, and she smiled sadly whenever her face was turned to mine.

**T**HE SUN FLOODED THE COTTAGE until it was no longer the strange thing that it had been during the night. I even began to think I had lived there all my life and knew intimately all that had happened, and all that would happen. And I dreaded to return to the town.

I offered the girl money for the night's lodging, and I was pleased when she accepted it. I bowed to the old grandmother, and then to the coffin. I bowed to each of the children and walked down through the avenue of stunted cypresses which gleamed like bronze.

When I had gone a little way, I looked back. A plume of smoke rose from the cottage, and in the doorway, shining in the full sunlight, I saw the girl naked to the waist with the child at her breast and the warm yellow sun on her shoulders. Dew glittered in the grass. The smoke rose higher. I thought of all those who lived in the house, and long afterwards, when the house was no longer in sight, I would look back and watch the blue smoke rising above the bronze trees.

END



Drawings by Concetta Cacciola

By Adam Bookmaker

# LET THE BOMB DROP

**“When the forts of folly fall,” says this indignant author, “you’ll find my body by the wall”**

*“Adam Bookmaker” is the pseudonym of a well-known American journalist who prefers to let this uncompromising statement of his convictions be weighed on its own merits. He had previously published several factual reports intended to awaken Americans to the horrors of another war—efforts which, as he sets forth here, he now believes were futile.*

**T**HE LAST act of Karel Čapek’s play *R.U.R.* saw the elderly scientist looking out of the window as the robots stormed the headquarters of the human beings who had created them. Presently he said sadly:

“It was a fine thing to be a man.”

Past tense slightly anticipated—by a few minutes in his case, by a few years in ours. He was threatened by robots; we, by the Bomb.

But it isn’t merely the Bomb. Atomic by-products are just as bad, and even bacterial warfare might settle our hash. A good many people on the periphery of our world—Eskimos, New Guinea cannibals, Indians in the Amazon valley—may go relatively unscathed, and, in their own way, though it is by no means our way, they also are men. But, odds-on, the world, as we know and sometimes value it, is going to hell in a hack.

Anybody disagreeing is, in view of the imminence of another World War, indulging in optimism based on sheer reluctance to admit that the world as he knows it can die. The Bomb made war unthinkable, said the editorial writers not long ago. So it did. But the unthinkable can happen with churlish disregard of human beings and their faulty mental equipment.

Come as near as you can to ignoring your personal stake in continuing your normal way of life—and then look hard at the map and the newspaper. What odds would you lay, as a man from Mars, on our having no major war in, let's say, the next generation?

War will come and our world will end—with both bangs and whimpers: a succession of bangs greater than those at Hiroshima, paralyzing the major ganglia of society; then a diminuendo of whimpers as by-products, bacteria, and so forth follow up. Our world will behave as flesh does when leprosy attacks its nerve tissues—puffing morbidly, sloughing away, losing tactile sense as customary emotions, ways, and institutions atrophy.

We are already beyond reasonable hope of forestalling World War III by arousing constructive fear of the potentialities of the new weapons. For a while after Hiroshima, I was doing my share in that direction, believing that the emergency was outrageously desperate—which I still believe—and that doing something was better than doing nothing. By now I doubt that. The traceable results of the fear-stimulating work I did—and I consider it to have been capable work—were dismally close to *nil*. So were the results of similar work by others. The available evidence looks to me ample and con-

clusive: The likelihood that World War III will mean virtual annihilation for both sides has not sunk in and cannot be expected to sink at all into the American public mind.

It is God's own cockeyed truth that the Taft-Hartley bill aroused more dynamic general emotions, and that the last outbreak of infantile paralysis stirred up more public alarm, than all the warnings—amply spread by press and radio—issued by scientists and co-operating writers during the past two years. In fact, Frank Sullivan wrote for the *New Yorker* a cute cliché-expert sequence using the things earnest people in a position to know were saying about the Bomb. That gave me more chills than any pictures of Hiroshima. Mr. Arbuthnot's phrases were already trite, true, but they were also about as funny and as trite as *Cras tibi*, or "The future is yours," on a tombstone.

Since so much effort achieved so little, further beating of the dead horse is pointless. Thrice zero is still zero. The net effect, let's face it, was gags about flying saucers and a new brand of soap flakes called Atomic Fluff.

For the test of whether a man believes a thing is whether his behavior reflects his belief. An eminent atomic scientist, glooming over public indifference eighteen months ago, said that the public

had obviously not taken the thing in at all, else real estate values in big industrial cities would be tumbling cataclysmically. He was right and still is. The fact that the statement has a slightly ludicrous air is the index of its rightness.

This is not meant as a reproach directed especially at Americans. They are as they are, you and I included. Too few of them have had the emotional and intellectual training necessary to enable them to absorb atomic facts as, thanks to other training, they can absorb the facts represented by an epidemic or a yegg with a gun. Our future pretty certainly contains a parallel to the situation in hell as described by the Scots preacher:

*“And in that day the damned in muckle hell will look up frae amang the flames and stenches of the pit and stretch forth their arms and cry to the Laird in Heaven whaur He sits on his gowden throne in His infinite mercy and say: ‘Laird, Laird, we didna ken.’ And the Laird will look down on the damned and say in His infinite mercy: ‘Well, ye ken the noo.’”*

I do not mean that the modern *Cassandras*, the Society of Atomic Scientists, is individually or collectively God—the intellectual antics of some of them clearly demonstrate the contrary. I do mean that plenty of warning has done no more good than would warning

by radio if we had no receiving sets.

There was actually little reason ever to have supposed that prevention-by-fear was feasible. World War I, with its mass slaughter, poison gas, high explosives, and clear indications of what future aerial warfare would be like, was bad enough. During the '20s the world, Germany included, was lavishly well briefed in these matters and their implications. The result—if not necessarily the consequence—was Hitler and World War II. Even before Hiroshima opened up inconceivable possibilities, World War II had become a still better sermon. Rotterdam, Coventry, Stalingrad, Hamburg amounted to a beautifully-paced, cumulative demonstration—remember the *civilians* of Hamburg trying to run away, only to die with their feet stuck in the blazing asphalt of the streets. If horror could do it, such things would already have ruled further wars out of the human race's book of prospects. Hiroshima merely cubed what was already fearful enough when World War II squared World War I.

Probably prevention-by-fear was in itself a poor idea anyway. Even if it could be created, fear on a scale commensurate with present peril might paralyze rather than stimulate. It would be hard to blame atomic scientists, who

really are close to grasping our probable future, if they imitated the old-time Millerites, who, on their prophet's word that the world would end on a near date, sold all their goods for a song and gathered on hilltops in order to be available for convenient snatching up to heaven. Only, unlike the Millerites, the scientists would be making sense. Such a response, followed through, would make the average man omit having children, cease planning for security, neglect long-range maintenance of plant—adding up to a degree of catastrophic degeneration that would be almost as devastating as that which the new warfare itself might produce.

Incidentally, it might hasten the coming of war. A United States disorganized by behaving as if World War III were as imminent as it actually is would make a very easy mark for You-Know-Who. Y-K-W, in fact, has already made it pretty clear that she is waiting for economic depression to soften

us up for easy pushing around. Compared to the chaos that would come from a widespread tendency to behave like the Millerites, any conceivable depression would be as chicken pox to meningitis.

In any case, it would be futile to put the wind up the American people alone. Before the power of fear could effectively cool off anticipation of World War III, all probable parties to same would be in a state of extreme apprehension. How can the Cassandra Society, working outside the "iron curtain" flood Russia with the needed propaganda? How do you get the fantastic menaces of the new warfare across to the average Chinese, illiterate and lacking access to radio? Our minority of the human race won't listen, it appears; the vast majority of the race have no opportunity to listen; nor, in view of our example, is there reason to believe that they would catch on if they could be reached.

Time would offer some hope—say, ten generations of superhu-



manly skillful reorientation of most of the two billion people now alive and wanting to live. Let nobody tell you that warfare is fundamental in "human nature." Several known peoples, notably the western American Indians, used to have so little notion of warfare that, when astounded whites tried to explain it, they could not grasp the concept at all. Natives isolated in Oceania remembered that their remote ancestors had gone warring but had determined, under stress of circumstances, to abolish warfare. So the thing is possible as a conscious reform.

Suppose we asked a fish to cross the Sahara. Life is so adaptable that his remote descendants might manage it, provided successive generations were afforded enough time for slow change and the luck of mutations in the right directions. But, unless assured ample time, the fish could only advise us wearily not to talk like damn fools. And time is what we do not have. Instead of ten generations

minimum, we have perhaps ten years maximum.

We are the sorcerer's apprentice or the man with the bottled genie, and if those be clichés, better make the most of them. Most of us were well-meaning people, many of us were clever people, some of us had gone further than most of us realized in exploring the use of intelligence to make sense of ourselves. But we had the strategic bad judgment to advance on a disastrously irregular front. Perhaps we were snuffed out because our brains insisted on doing better in analysis than in synthesis. Never mind the post-mortem though—intelligence as we know it won't be here to make it. We are very prettily painted into a corner. We didna ken, but we ken the noo. Give or take five years from a base of ten? O.K.

All this has a ridiculously ghastly resemblance to the ham fictioneer's favorite plot about what a man should do when the doctor tells him he has only so



long to live. The human race will be crossing the bar, absurd to the last, in terms suitable to a somewhat morbid soap opera. But many a patient has been actually faced with just that problem in grim fact.

What he usually does is to go on acting much as if he had had no such news. It is very difficult to step outside the familiar demands and values of one's accustomed life. Besides, the doctor might be wrong, as doctors sometimes are in such cases. Thus, refusing to take it big is about the only practical possibility and probably wiser than it looks at first glance. For no rational gambler takes a bet as anything but a bet—with a chance, however remote, that the long shot will come home.

The fish, confronted by a Sahara crossing, stipulated both time and luck. Since we have no time, luck—frantic luck, out-of-all-whooping luck—is the only resource left. The human race has had fool's luck in the past, else the relatively liberal side would not have got at atomic energy first. Perhaps whoever juggles the controls on the wheel, or switches the dice, is curious to see what we can do with atomic energy if we fail to rub ourselves out by using it on each other. Certainly our new technology, perhaps our consequent sociology and economics, will be worth seeing.

Whether the odds are 5-to-1, 1000-to-1, or  $n$ -to-1 against, they cannot be infinity-to-zero; the long shot is the only thing to play because it is the only end on which one can collect. I suppose some pathological cases are now assuming correctly that the worst is going to happen and are be-taking themselves to remote islands where, though vegetation is the rule in both senses, the nastier aspects of the new warfare will come last, mildly, or not at all. Such egocentricity is impossible to normal people, for the world as they know it is the nourishing and supporting medium in which they grow and without which mere life loses significance.

Thus, firmly as I believe that atrabilious pessimism alone makes sense now, I am not planning to take to the hills. If the tenor and rhythms of the Gettysburg Address are to become as meaningless as the unknown magical chants of the Folsom Man, if the cities where I learned to grow up, the precarious decencies that western civilization tries to foster, are to go, I prefer to be there and go with them. I don't want to live without them, and it would not feel pertinent to run away from them and hang myself privately. As Arnold said, "When the forts of folly fall"—and God knows folly is the kindest of words for what we have committed, every man Jack of us—"find my body

by the wall." Where else would it be?

But my body stands little chance of dying a dignified death. I should prefer, like the forty-three little ice-crabs whom the whale swallowed in the *Water Babies*, that my acquaintance and I "gave each other a parting pinch all round, tucked their legs under their stomachs, and determined to die decently, like Julius Caesar." But, in the world that W. W. III will have created, there will be few decencies or possibilities of decency.

Fantastic, isn't it, that these issues are not speculations as to what one might do under circumstances dreamed up by an uninspired imitator of H. G. Wells, but practical considerations for here and now, as concrete as a decision to marry, enter a new business, or buy a building lot? What, after all, is the proper costume to wear when attending the end of the world?

If there is any point at all about this matter, it is that the only thing we can hope for is luck. But we can, and should, also prepare a situation favoring the effects of luck if it chooses to strike. We must keep jostling the war-encouraging factors in the world, not so much in the hope of ending war in general but to keep its elements out of alignment, make it tough for the gears to mesh, delay delivery of the crucial ingredient of the explosive mixture. If that

sounds vague, say that we must rely on old-fashioned power-juggling while continuing to persuade others that we are in such good shape that any given moment would be a bad time to start something.

In other words, stall, threaten, and reassure abroad while putting the domestic house in order. That does not sound hopeful. Old-fashioned international poker-playing neither has nor deserves high standing as a war-preventer. But, in its time, it has often delayed wars; and, as it happens, it is the only tool available now. And you'd better get over that emotional habit of wanting things to sound hopeful.

The special-pleaders may denounce future American foreign policies as reactionary or imperialistic or aggressive or appeasing or sentimental or quixotic or wasteful. In a situation as mad as this, all may be right, albeit for the wrong reasons. But the only way to judge our future diplomacy and economy will be functionally—does a given act, viewed with the cunning of the serpent, accelerate or delay the moment when some nervous kid in coveralls receives orders to throw the switch on somebody's Bomb Mark I plus-X.

Meanwhile, if there's something you want to do that you've been postponing to a more suitable time, better start it soon. END

# ATOMIC SCIENCE

... wrapped up in just six titles

*From time to time, '48 will ask a leading authority in a field of current interest to select a short list of readable books which provide a sound understanding of the subject. Following is the first in the series. Readers are invited to suggest subjects.*

**I**N MY OPINION, no one can approach the subject of atomic energy—the most important problem in the world today—from a merely scientific and technical point of view. It seems to me that it is not enough to know all about isotopes and pitchblende and plutonium. The whole of human destiny is entwined in this subject. That is why, in proposing a bibliography within the reach of every reader, and one that any reader could find time to encompass, I have included, besides scientific and historical sources, three books on the problems of peace, security, and the continued life of man with man.

My selections are:

*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, published monthly by the Atomic Scientists of Chicago, 1126 E. 59 St., Chicago, Ill. Yearly subscription, \$2.00; also available at some newsstands, 25c per copy.

Personally, I find the *Bulletin* the most valuable single source of up-to-date information on atomic energy. It reports progress on its use and control. It analyzes the divergences of view between the U.S., the U.S.S.R., and other nations, as well as the hopes for progress. It reviews Army and Navy thinking on atomic warfare. It reports developments in peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Selig Hecht, *Explaining the Atom*, Viking Press, 1947, \$2.75.

An authoritative account of the scientific steps, both theoretical and experimental, that have led to our present knowledge of nuclear fission, by a distinguished colleague of mine who took part in many of them. In this book, the late Selig Hecht provides, in very simple language, the necessary information for a layman to form an independent opinion on the practical problems of atomic energy confronting the world today.

John Hersey, *Hiroshima*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1946, \$1.75.

A vivid description of the impact of the atomic bomb on a community of men, women, and children. This book describes in terms of human experience the fate of people subjected to atomic bombing.

Cord Meyer, Jr., *Peace or Anarchy*, Little, Brown, 1947, \$2.50.

This book reviews in a very complete manner the whole complex of problems connected with peace and security. It includes what I consider to be an honest discussion of the political and social implications of the atomic bomb.

Emery Reves, *The Anatomy of Peace*, Harper, 1945, \$2.00.

This book takes up the whole problem of peace against a broad background of world history. The author presents convincingly the necessity for world government as the only effective solution of the security problem. Is there *any* other solution?

Raymond Swing, *In the Name of Sanity*, Harper, 1946, \$1.00.

Based on a series of broadcasts, this book contains analytical and critical discussions of important events in the months immediately following the release of the news of the atomic energy discoveries. It is excellent, I think, for a day-to-day account of the most important events affecting the development of national and international policy on atomic power. END

**By John L. Brown**

**Photographs by Roger Coster**

**JUKE-BOX**

**The new Bohemians of Paris read Hemingway, dance to swing music, and believe in nothing**

**B**OHEMIA has always found a home in Paris.

When young Pablo Ruiz y Picasso arrived from Barcelona at the turn of the century, he headed straight for Montmartre. It was a tough, cheap, picturesque suburb in those days, with vineyards and windmills, frequented by artists and poets, by gangsters and their girls. The artists gathered at Père Frédé's cabaret, *Le Lapin Agile*. Here Picasso talked and fought and drank with Modigliani, Braque, Utrillo, the poet Apollinaire, and the novelist Francis Carco, who wrote all about it later.

When the night clubs and the tourists moved in, Bohemia moved over to the left bank of the Seine,

**John L. Brown** wrote a regular Paris column for the *New York Times Book Review*, has lectured throughout France, and has contributed to many periodicals here and abroad. He is preparing an intellectual history of modern France.

to Montparnasse. It set up headquarters in the Rotonde, the Coupole, the Dôme (the literary capital of America in the '20s), the Select.

The international Bohemia of Montparnasse had a golden, Indian summer glow over it, the flavor of the last fling. It belonged to that "long week-end," the period between the two wars, when bourgeois culture, although shaken, was still unshattered. The names of Hemingway, Man Ray, Gertrude Stein hallow it. *The Sun Also Rises* is its testament.

Now intellectual Bohemia has moved again, is putting up its stand in the neighborhood of the ancient church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. These quiet streets are lined with art galleries, book shops, binderies, *antiquaires*, old houses with silent courtyards. The *quartier* has always been a home of the arts, and its cafés—especial-

# EXISTENTIALISTS

ly the Flore, the Deux Magots, and Lipp—have a long literary tradition. Today the chief gathering places are the Tabou and the Flore.

If you want to find out what is happening in *avant-garde* Paris today, a table at the Flore is probably a good place to start. Don't expect glamor here. It's a small, smoky, unpretentious place, usually overcrowded and buzzing with talk. The imitation leather banquettes are much the worse for wear. No ribbons of neon, no plates of chrome decorate it. It owes its present fame as the birthplace and shrine of French *Existentialisme* to the patronage of Jean-Paul Sartre and his friends. Here assemble solemn youths in

Any night—every night—actress Juliette Greco and fellow Existentialists converge on the Tabou, a center of Paris' new intellectual cafe society



colored shirts and horn-rimmed glasses, long-haired girls in slacks and sweaters, all of them intent on publishing a book, painting a masterpiece, getting into the movies. For them, the café serves as a meeting place, an open forum, a library, an office, a confessional.

Most of them are under thirty. They lead precarious, underfed, and underheated lives in the small hotels and *bistros* of the neighborhood. Their Bohemia has only a surface resemblance to that of Montparnasse and Montmartre.

Bohemia of the past lived on the scraps from prosperous, middle-class tables. The war has swept those tables clean. Today, the Bohemian must pay his own way, is increasingly forced to earn his own living, working for radio, publishing, newspapers, movies. The *vie de Bohème* traditionally bloomed where food and wine and a garret under the eaves could be had for a song. Now the days of a filling meal for 4 *fr* 50 are apparently gone forever. Living in Paris takes a lot of cash. Even artists can't get along without it.

These harsh economic realities were somewhat obscured immediately after the Liberation. Many speculators who had accumulated bundles of black market money, decided to invest it in the arts. Now that that time of brief prosperity is over, people aren't buying pictures, publishing houses are fold-

ing, and magazines are expiring after a couple of issues.

The economic distress of Bohemia is further complicated by political tension. In 1948, politics is a matter of life and death. French intellectuals feel that they are no longer free, that France must choose between rival imperialisms. "We all realize," a young novelist writes me, "that we are going to be eaten. We can only decide with what sauce it shall be."

The rigidly dogmatic Communism of the '40s no longer countenances the vague, revolutionary liberalism of the '30s, when it was possible to combine individual fantasy and party membership. The CP boys have no nonsense about them these days.

Their papers brand Existentialism and the intellectual life of Saint-Germain-des-Prés as the ultimate expression of bourgeois decadence. You won't catch them compromising their orthodoxy by taking an *apéritif* in this enemy territory.

In bars, in cheap restaurants, in small cabarets, the talk and laughter continue, but it is rather different from the talk heard in the Dôme in the '30s. Albert Camus, in a series of articles significantly entitled *Neither Victims Nor Executioners*, written for the newspaper *Combat* (the daily of intellectual Bohemia), eloquently sums up

the convictions of the generation of young men and women who drink at the Bar Vert, dine (frugally) at the Petit Saint-Benoit, dance to the juke-box at the Tabou:

Life has no validity unless it can project itself towards the future, can ripen, and progress. Living against a wall is a dog's life. And the men of my generation, those who are going into the factories and the colleges, have lived and are living more and more like dogs.

This Bohemian generation has little hope for the future. They have neither the fanatical, doctrinaire faith of the Communists, nor the easy sense of superiority of the Americans. As both the orthodox Right and the orthodox Left demand unquestioning and uncritical obedience, the French intellectual is convinced that he is a dying species unless western Europe can evolve a middle-of-the-road socialism and avoid assimilation by either the West or the East.

In spite of the despair of their philosophical masters — Sartre, Camus, Bataille, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Nietzsche—these intellectuals have retained the Gallic quality of making the most of the moment. They communicate a sense of intellectual excitement, a disinterested devotion to the things of the spirit that you still feel more intensely in Paris than anywhere

else in the world today.

Poverty has rewarded these enthusiasts with purity, and the absence of book clubs, big circulation magazines, and a moving picture industry prodigal with cash but not with ideas, has delivered them from the temptations and taboos that beset their American counterparts. They somehow still convey the impression that the founding of a new review, the appearance of a manifesto, the publication of a book may save the world after all.

Who are their prophets? They are always talking about Kafka, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, although it is usually second-hand talk. Sartre enjoys a real authority among them; he has, they say, "created a new conception of the man of letters." Everyone respects Camus. Georges Bataille has a few fervent followers. Most of them promote one or more of the isms that spring up in such abundance in this climate. The past couple of years have produced a whole series—*Sensorialisme*, *Intimisme*, *Dolorisme*, *Lettrisme*. As for *Existentialisme*, it has become an institution by now, an official article of export.

The fiction they read with approval is imported from America. They admire the anti-intellectuality, the brutal impact of "the hard-boiled novel." Henry Miller is the object of a cult, is often spoken



*Unlike their predecessors of the old Left Bank, artist Jacques Dropy, 18, and mannequin Estelle Danfray, 20, must earn a living while pursuing the Muse*

of as the most important living American writer. These young Bohemians often may not have read Zola, or Balzac, but they can cite chapter and verse from Faulkner, Caldwell, Dos Passos.

You often perceive in their violent likes and dislikes a certain superficiality, a lack of solid information. A serious decline in cultural standards has taken place within a few years. War and the Occupation interrupted the education of this generation, intensified their doubts about the value of their humanistic heritage. They lack the sense of form and of style that marks the work of Gide or Valéry. This Bohemia has ceased to believe in "style," has ceased to believe in "art," and, to a serious degree, has ceased to believe in man. They find the savage anti-



humanism of Henri Michaux more honest than a party-dictated doctrine of "brotherhood" which conceals, they feel, a murderous contempt for the human person.

But in the midst of this despair, life goes on. At twenty, metaphysical anguish is a torment that comes and goes, that can even be rather pleasant and distinguished in understanding company. "See you at the Flore at five?" You go from table to table, shaking hands, picking up bits of scandal, tips on the races, black market developments. The editor of a new magazine asks, Wouldn't you like to do the movie reviews?

You go directly on to dinner at the Armagnac or the Petit Saint-Benoît. A real coffee at the Pont-Royal afterwards. Wonderful contacts at the Pont-Royal bar, lots

of foreigners and all the big shots from Gallimard. Would be wonderful to go to America. From the Pont-Royal to the Bar Vert with a gang that runs a new literary review. Call up Paule to go dancing at the Tabou. Guess who was there the other night with Marcel Duhamel? Erskine Caldwell! *Formidable!* Hear the paper's fold-

ing? No more *fric*. Got to find another job. That makes four since the first of the year. Did you read that new American novel, *I'll Spit On Your Graves*? Is it hot! *Formidable!*

The talk goes on and on. Everyone is intelligent, everyone is aware that there is a crisis in the novel, a crisis in publishing, a

*The Tabou is all things to all men—a place for brooding, flirting, and/or reading the latest avant-garde manifesto*





Sipping wine reflectively is Anne Marie Cazalis, author of a typical Existentialist poem: *Je riais devant un cercueil* ("I laughed beside a coffin")

crisis in language, a crisis in man. And, of course, there's always a crisis in the government. Crises to every taste.

In the shabby, smoky atmosphere of these little *boîtes*, a European tradition is expiring to the sound of animated conversation and juke-box music. Expiring?

Even a Bohemian needs fresh air occasionally, which is why the prettiest of them all, Michele Jeanpigeon (right) and a friend sit one out on the curb

Perhaps that's too dramatic. But most of these girls in slacks and boys in colored shirts dancing swing every night don't really believe they are going anywhere from here.

And besides, they'll tell you, it doesn't make much difference anyway.

END





William Gropper



William A. Lydgate



Ogden Nash

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**Two poems by Ogden Nash**

## **The Ornithologist**

*A young flirt of Ceylon,  
Who led the boys on,  
Playing Follow the Leda  
Succumbed to a swan.*

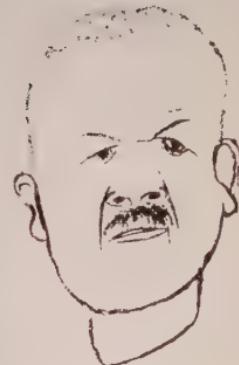
## **The Hunter**

*The hunter crouches in his bind  
'Neath camouflage of every kind,  
And conjures up a quacking noise  
To lend Come Hither to his decoys.  
This grown-up man, with pluck and luck,  
Is hoping to outwit a duck.*

By JAMES THRALL SOBY

# BEN SHAHN

**His paintings have the power of posters; his posters are works of art**



REPRODUCED on these pages are several of Ben Shahn's posters as well as his paintings. The selection recognizes—as did the major showing given to him by the New York Museum of Modern Art—Shahn's double-barreled achievement as an artist. So interrelated are the two phases of his art that the posters here included exist also as easel pictures, and such a painting as *Father and Child* (inside the front cover) might become a memorable poster simply through the addition of lettering.

These images illustrate a fundamental of Shahn's philosophy: that there should be a minimum separation between the private and the public work of art. He believes

that the painter should speak with the same voice in the room and in the street. He is pleased by the criticism that his posters sometimes look like fragments of murals. "After all," he says, "the Renaissance frescoes were meant to tell a story, and many of their details could have been effective in poster form."

Ben Shahn brings to his poster-paintings the same kind of devotion and emotional force that characterize his easel pictures. He repudiates the modern conception

**James Thrall Soby** is chairman of the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He is the author of studies of Picasso, Chirico, Dali, Klee, and, most recently, Shahn.

of the poster as a flat, brassy image, planned to seduce the eye but not to disturb the heart. He never paints anything with his left hand. Instead, he gives to whatever he undertakes, in whatever medium, his utmost conviction and pride. His hope, so evidently fulfilled, is that his painstaking sincerity will challenge both attentive connoisseurs and casual passers-by.

At the root of Shahn's art is his respect for reality, and it is significant that in his workshop, Sears Roebuck catalogues largely replace art books and manuals as sources of reference. He likes what people use and wear and build; he is a master of the actual detail of dress or place which gives the individual a heightened identity. He prefers to paint only what he has seen, or what he knows, from

documentary evidence, must certainly exist.

Yet even the hurried observer will be aware that Shahn is not simply a realist. He admires men like Picasso, Max Beckmann, and Paul Klee more than he does the genre artists of an earlier time. His own pictures abound in those distortions and elisions in which twentieth century art has been particularly rich. He does not blurt the truth, but tells it with vivid and trained eloquence.

Like every painter worth the name, Shahn cannot be defined exactly in terms of inspirational process. Nevertheless, there are a

**Hunger (1946), which needs no words to convey its message, was used by the CIO Political Action Committee as a poster addressed to the nation's voters. The label: We Want Peace**

RICHARD LOEB COLLECTION

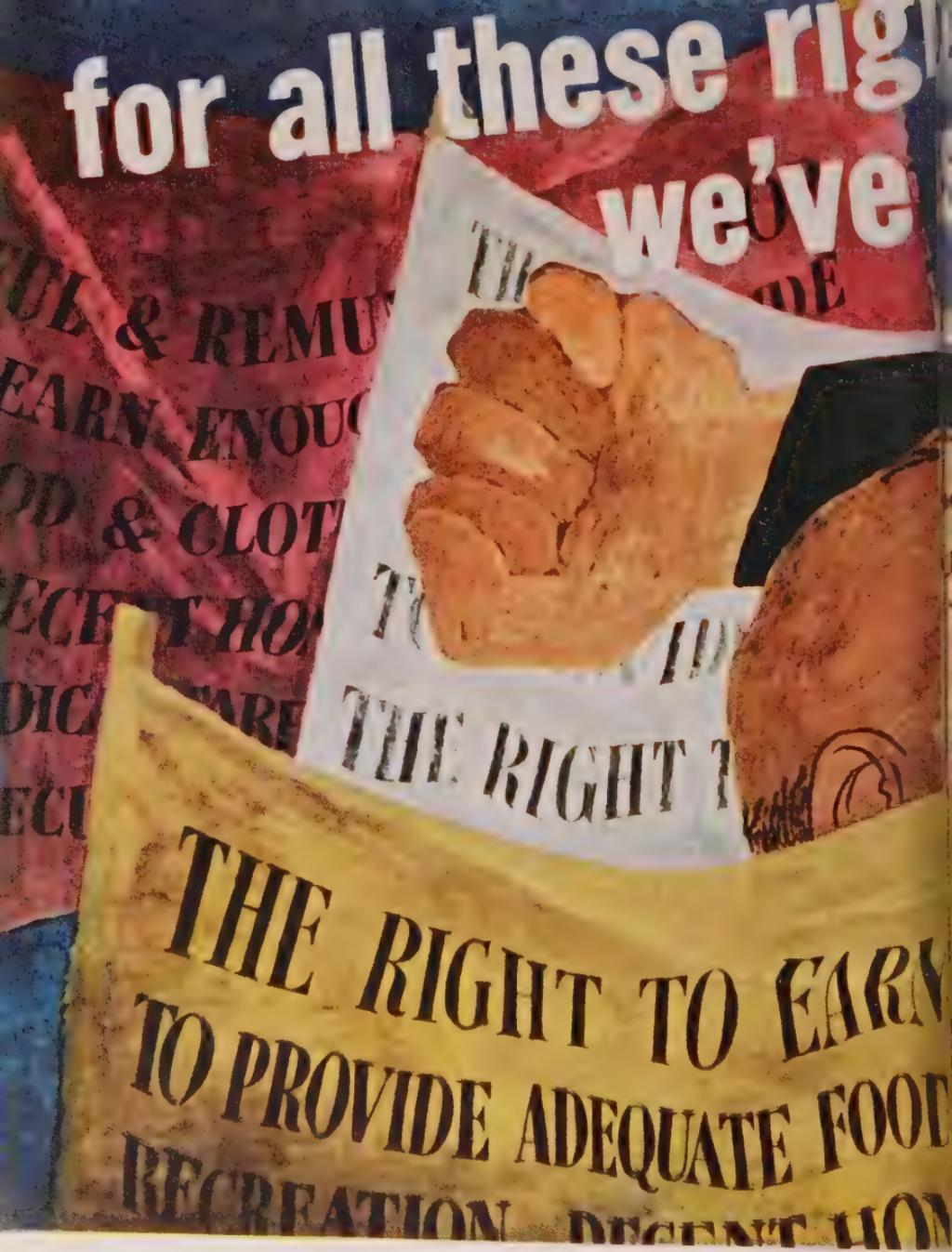


*Shahn's technique: The sketch (left) is developed into this detail from his painting, Girl Jumping Rope (1943)*



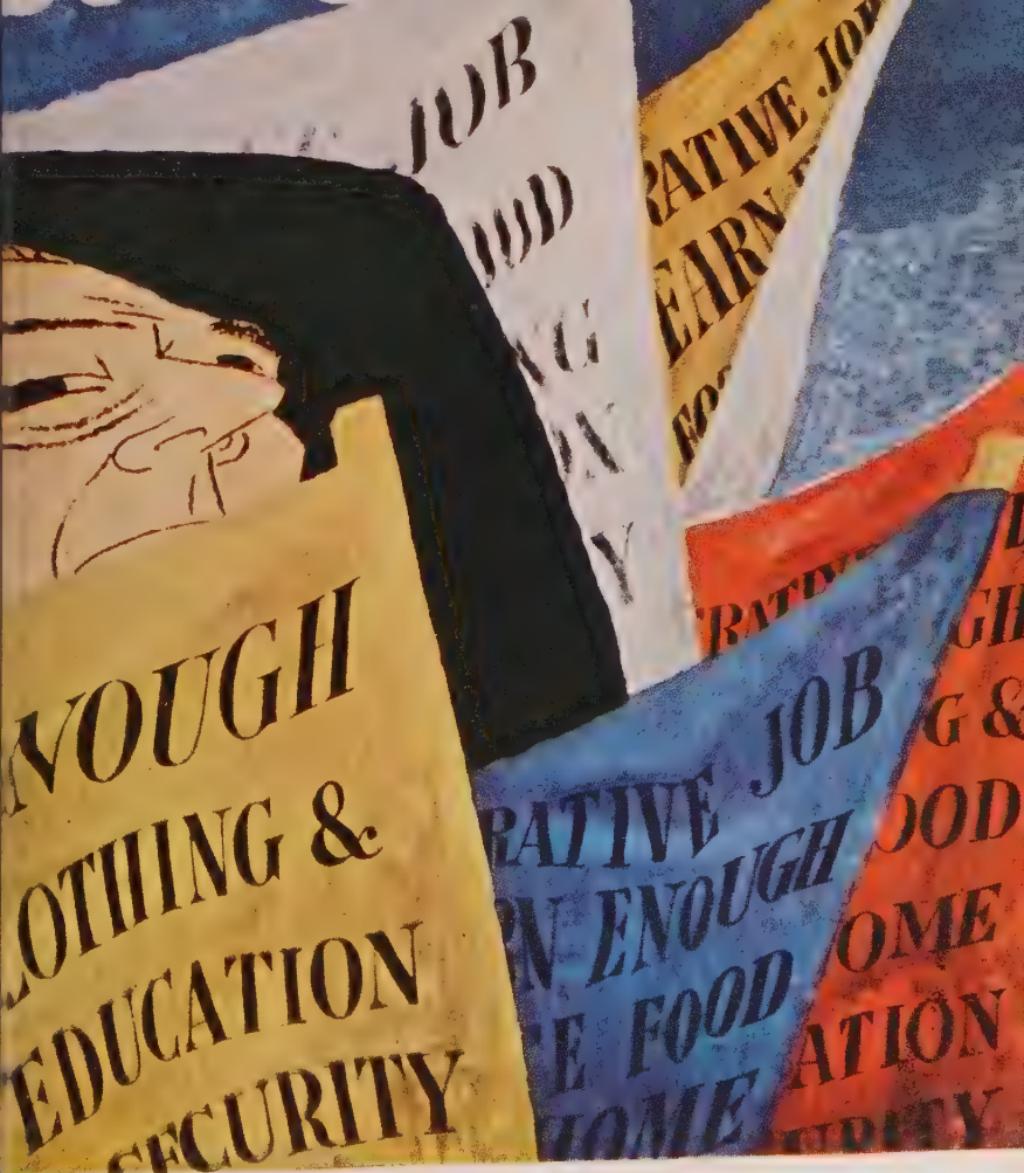


Bra. Hahn



*This mural-like poster is a direct political appeal, but artists see in it the same adm*

st begun to fight



ign, emotional force, and sincerity that characterize Ben Shahn's easel paintings



*The Violin Player (1947) symbolizes one of Shahn's preoccupations, the universal yearning for expression*

few facts that may help us to understand how the works here reproduced came about. *The Violin Player*, for example, is based on a photograph taken by Shahn ten years before the painting was executed. During this long period the image haunted his memory as the symbol of a yearning which Shahn was astounded to find among people living in hopeless poverty (the Sears Roebuck catalogue is full of musical instruments, he says).

And through a comparable process, details from certain of his paintings swell in his imagination until they emerge as full-scale works, often in a quite different

context. The boy in *Hunger* was first a small sketch used for a food conservation drive in the federal housing development for garment workers where Shahn lives. The image grew with the times, so to speak, and in 1946 it served as a weapon of political propaganda and as an unforgettable plea against war.

A constant of Shahn's art is that it responds only to the deepest pressures on his consciousness. It is never hurried; it is never manufactured; it is never slick. This is the art of a man whose conscience keeps pace with his talent, who will not paint at all unless he can create an image, witty or tragic, lyric or harsh, in which he wholly believes.

END

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*Pre-print*

## **WHAT LADY GODIVA WANTED**

She would have liked to be a powerful queen, like Queen Boadicea who almost defeated the Romans and poisoned herself rather than survive her defeat; she would have liked to be a great magician, a second Melusina, and have men and beasts fawn at her feet; she would have liked to be a great lover like Isolde or Brunhilde of Neustria, or in more exalted moments, a great courtesan like Aspasia or Cleopatra. She dreamed of cunning and ruthless intrigues for domination like those of famed Fredegund of Austrasia. On other days, she wished to be a cherry-cheeked peasant girl waiting at a stile for her sweaty peasant lover: she fancied poverty, cold, starving children, an imprisoned husband, and her grim, lonely struggle in the dead of a bleak winter. She envied the oriental princesses who studied alchemy and astronomy and played so divinely on the lute that princes and sultans gathered from all points of the desert to listen, entranced, to their melodies. She wanted to be so many different types of women that she failed to be properly any one of them.

—Raoul Faure

From "Lady Godiva and Master Tom," Harper & Brothers. To be published soon.



By Robert St. John

# HOW TO STARVE A GREEK TOWN



EMMANUEL

**Full warehouses and empty stomachs:  
symbols of the tragedy of Greece**

**W**E HAD gone into the mountains of Greece to visit a starving town—one of many being starved deliberately and systematically. Its UNRRA food shipments were being withheld by the Greek government; its people had been warned that if they tried to leave, the Greek army would shoot them on the roads.

Yes, there were many such towns, admitted the *nomarch*, head of the county government at Yanitsa.

**Robert St. John** is the well-known radio commentator, foreign correspondent, and author. His book, *From the Land of the Silent People*, records his wartime experiences in the Balkans.

Yanitsa. There were forty-six villages in his district with an average population of 800. About half of them were cut off entirely from any food supplies. Nineteen of them had received no food for five months; two had received none for six months. The monthly ration which the people were supposed to get included 11 pounds of flour, 2 of sugar, 1 of dried fish,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pound of coffee, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds each of macaroni and corn syrup. The *nomarch* admitted that the UNRRA food which had been allotted to the villages was in a warehouse right here in Yanitsa. He patted Ernest Griffin on the shoulder. "Don't worry," he said.



*Even under "normal" conditions, a Greek village family's meal provides scant nourishment: anything less means starvation*

"In a matter of days our army will drive the bandits from this district and then we will give food to everybody."

Griffin is a mild, kindly fellow, a British UNRRA official for the Yanitsa district. He glared at the *nomarch* and said:

"You told me that same thing exactly six months ago!"

The starving was being done, we knew, for "political" reasons. By imposing martial law and a food blockade on the civil war area, the Greek government hoped to pre-

vent the villagers from aiding the guerrillas. But the blockade had gone into effect a long time ago; now people were starving.

In Athens an American official of UNRRA had let me see a map of Greece made after a careful survey by trained UNRRA investigators. It was speckled with red dots. Each dot represented a town or village being denied UNRRA food. For example, in the Elasson district there were fifty-one villages, of which forty-five had had no outside supplies for at least ten

months. In the Grevena district ninety-three out of 105 villages had been condemned to starvation. These were samples; there were many other districts that were just as badly off.

The starving, the UNRRA official had told me, was being done coldly and thoroughly. Greek newspapers had carried articles about it, to no effect. Hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the embargo. And to make the situation even worse, the people of these villages, many of whom made their livelihood by cutting timber, were forbidden to go into the woods. Banks were ordered not to extend credit. In the Elasson district four hundred tons of food, which UNRRA had shipped in for distribution to the villages, were lying in warehouses. Martial law had been declared, so UNRRA could no longer deal with civil officials. The Greek military authorities told UNRRA that if they allowed food to go into the villages, the people would say Moscow had forced them to do it. And now that UNRRA was quitting Greece, the American official told me there would be no one to bring pressure, to argue, to plead.

Even uglier than these facts were rumors that towns continued to starve after guerrillas had left the area. In Athens and in Saloniaka I had heard gossip of a racket. . . .

The *nomarch* in Yanitsa admitted it. The rule which all county officials in Greece follow, he said, is that the food for a village is given to one man, the local *eparch*, or mayor. The *eparch* is responsible for seeing that the UNRRA shipments are distributed properly. Some of the *eparchs*, he admitted, left their mountain villages and came down into a town in the valley to live; they were appointed by the government, and they alone could get permission to pass through the blockade. When it came time to distribute, they drew the rations for each entire village. Then they posted notices on telephone poles somewhere in town saying that they had the current month's food allotment for such and such a village; if the people of that village would call at the *eparch*'s town address within five days they could draw their rations.

The people back in the mountain village had no way of knowing about the notices on the telephone poles in town, which might be twenty miles away. And even if they did, the army had forbidden them to leave their villages. The army had decreed that any human being or animal found on the roads would be shot without warning. And so, in five days, the *eparch* took down the notice and sold the food on the black market. The county *nomarch* avoided this

point, but Griffin later told me that a small *klepsi-skepsi*, or bribe, is generally given by each *eparch* to the officials who allow the racket.

The *nomarch* told us that Asvestario was one of the towns which had been cut off from food for months, so we set out across the fields for Asvestario—Griffin, Marie Pratt (his American fiancée from Paris, Illinois), his bilingual assistant, his driver, and I.

We drove through a narrow twisting street in Asvestario and parked the jeep in front of a com-

bination *cafenion* and general store. By the time the driver had pulled on the brake and shut off the engine, people were running toward us from all directions. They said we couldn't talk to their *eparch*. He was down in the town. He lived there now.

They told us that the last time they had had a shipment of food was ten months ago. Several hundred people were gathered around us by now, and they were still coming.

They said there were 117 families in Asvestario. Most of those

*Picture of a half-truth: UNRRA's wheat reached Athens but not the starving villages of the civil war area*



left were women and children, judging by the crowd around our jeep. There were only about a dozen men in sight, and most of the children were under 15. They said 200 of the villagers had been declared paupers or, to use the official UNRRA word, "indigents." "Indigents," as Marie said, doesn't sound so bad as "paupers." The villagers used to make their living principally by cutting timber, but for months the government had forbidden them to go to the woods to work. When had they last had a shipment of clothing? They looked blankly at one another. Finally one old woman said: "So long ago we can't remember."

The women as well as the men were almost the color of American Indians. When we asked whether there were any medical supplies in the village, they agreed unanimously that there were none. The great number of children gathered around us prompted Marie to ask if there was a school teacher in Asvestario. No, there had been no teacher here in seven years—since 1940. That meant there were children 12 and 13 years old who had never seen the inside of a classroom. Marie said she didn't believe it. Did they mean that none of these children around us could read or write? They said yes, that was just what they meant—a majority of the village couldn't

read or write. About half the village spoke Turkish because they had come here from Turkey in an exchange of population in 1924.

Had they made any appeals to the government for food? Most of them laughed as if we had just told them a very funny story. Of course, they had, but what good did we think that did? Then we asked them if the *Endartes* (guerrillas) would take food if it were delivered to the village. One man answered that the *Endartes* hadn't been around in many months.

"We'd eat it up before anyone could take it from us," exclaimed a woman in the crowd.

Were any men from this village *Endartes*? Yes, there were four, and the whole family of one of them had gone into the hills with him. How many men from Asvestario were in the Royal Greek army? Six. That was counting the young man in uniform who stood close by the jeep. He was home on a long furlough. He was on sick leave.

What was the difference between events now and during the German occupation? They looked at one another and did some whispering. Then one of the men spoke up.

"When the Germans were here they didn't keep us from working. It was better then."

Did they have more or less food now than when the Germans were here? Less, they said. Much less

now. Did any of the villagers die of hunger during the winter? No. But it was going to be worse now. Last winter they had had a little food put away, but in the next four or five months many would probably die.

When would they be getting food from their own fields? Not for three months. Not for three months at the soonest.

Then they volunteered some information. Eight men from the village had been killed in the fighting with the Germans. Eight had already been killed in the civil war. Three men from the village were on the island of Crete, sentenced to fifteen years in exile. What for? For being against the return of the king, they said. The families of the three men were here, right here beside the jeep. One had five children. One had four. The other had three. Then they pushed forward the wife of one of the exiled men. She said her trouble was that her husband wrote from Crete that he would starve unless she sent him food. Where was she to get food for her husband on Crete? And where was she to get food for herself and her three children? She said she would give her children away if she could in order to keep them from starving; then she started to cry.

"I love my children. You understand? I love them and don't want them to go away. But I can't see

them starving. It hurts me inside worse than being hungry myself to have them crying because they have hunger pains."

Marie noticed that she was dressed in black, as if she were already in mourning.

Could they write to their husbands in exile? The woman in black said:

"We can write but we must say we are happy and everything is all right. Then they write back and say that they are happy and everything is all right with them too. Only they allow them to ask us for food and they allow them to tell us that they will starve unless we send them food."

An old man stepped forward. "My two sons have been killed."

Another man beside him said: "My house has been burned."

I wanted to ask them how such things happened, but Griffin had started a new line of questioning. He found out that each family had an average of three or four acres of land. They grew mostly wheat, enough to last about seven or eight months. In the old days they had raised many sheep here, but now there were only eight families with as many as twenty sheep apiece, and seventeen families with five or ten sheep. Some families had a mule or two. A few families had two cows. Other families had one. Most of them, however, had no animals at all.



*Where wheat is a weapon. The homeless children built a hut and tried to raise a pig. But the pig starved before they did*

It used to be possible, they said, for people to go to Yanitsa to get food. but that wasn't permitted now. What they needed most was grain—wheat or corn or any kind

of grain. Anything to give them strength, they said. Anything to keep them from feeling empty all the time. One man said:

“Now we go into the woods and

dig up wild roots. They don't make us strong. But they fill us up in here." He pointed to his stomach.

What they most worried about was "the disease." So far they had been lucky. But just look!

We did look. We looked at the babies they held up to us. Most of them had sores on their faces and arms. I took one infant in my arms. Its stomach was like that of a Tammany politician. Its arms and legs were as thin as the stem of the pipe I held in my mouth. We could tell, just looking over the crowd, that most of the villagers had a skin disease of some kind. Griffin said later it was caused by undernourishment and lack of soap.

I told Marie and her fiancé that

I wanted to go inside and look around the general store. There wasn't much to see. The shelves were dusty and what was on the shelves was dusty too. There was one string of rotten figs. One bottle of aspirin tablets—tablets that wouldn't cure what was going to be wrong with a lot of these people before very long. One string of garlic. Three or four one-pound boxes of mouldy bonbons. About five pounds of white beans. That was all—that and dust.

Then a man appeared with a bottle of *tsipouro*, a Greek alcoholic beverage. He brought five glasses for us all. I didn't want to drink without them, but Griffin whispered that there wasn't enough for everyone and I should have learned enough about the

*The real victims of civil war: Children of northern Greece*



Greeks to know they would be offended if we refused their hospitality. So we drank to the health and the wealth and the happiness of the starving village of Asvesario, the village which had had no food for ten months.

An old woman ran off down the street and then came back, very much excited, a few minutes later. She explained that she had a few hickens and for weeks she had been saving the eggs. She was sorry she didn't have five. Her hens weren't laying very well because there was nothing to feed them. We could understand that? But she had four *Christos Anesti* (Christ is risen) red-dyed Easter eggs.

I knew I would not be able to eat a bite of one of those eggs, but I had to take one. Before a *Christos Anesti* egg is eaten it is the custom to take it firmly in the right hand and bump the end against the end of someone else's egg. If you do it properly you break the other man's egg without cracking your own. The Greeks play this game during the Easter season—when they have plenty of eggs. The man who comes through the holidays with an uncracked egg is the *Christos Anesti* champion, but the people who lose get a chance to eat their eggs. The whole village watched and the children laughed and clapped their hands while we bumped eggs. Marie won. When the old woman

with the hens wasn't looking we slipped our eggs into the pockets of several small children.

Then they brought Pietro to us. He was an orphan. They said he was 16, but his body was that of a child of 10. His mind seemed even less developed, but his dark staring eyes were the eyes of an old man. Then they said we had to see "The Twins." They probably had names, but everyone called them simply "The Twins." They were babies who hadn't had a drop of milk since their mother's breasts had dried up months before. The twins didn't look as if they had much longer to live.

When we left, the whole village followed us to the edge of the hill and watched us start down into the valley. They asked us to promise them that we would "do something" for them. When they were out of sight I asked Marie and Griffin if they could think of anything we could do. Griffin didn't answer. He was staring off into space. Marie had tears in her eyes. I didn't say anything, but I was thinking a great many things.

I was thinking of the Truman Doctrine. I was thinking of the Golden Rule, which is sometimes practised by individuals, but by nations, never. I was thinking of the title of a book a friend of mine in New York had just written. She was calling it, *Freedom Is A Nice Word.*

END

By Mokil-Na-Potak  
as told to Walter Karig

# SAID A MAN FROM MOKIL

To a Pacific Islander, freedom under the Stars and Stripes is not the same as freedom to be himself

• *Mokil is a small, well-wooded, fertile island in the South Pacific, one of the many hundreds of atolls that make up the Caroline Islands. Its natives are a sturdy, dark-skinned people who, when left to their own devices, are a contented and peaceable lot. Along with ill-fated Bikini, which lies only a short distance to the north, Mokil came under the control of the U. S. Navy as a result of World War II. What its people think of the coming of civilization, a Mokil Islander here tells us in his own vivid way, with an assist from an American who knows him well.*

**M**A-KONG-IA! Please excuse me. I am Mokil-na-potak. My Bible name is Pensamin.

*Kassalalia!* May everything be good for you.

I will tell you about our people. *Melel inenin melel.* The truth most true. For us, our ways are the best.

Our people have lived in these islands a very long time. We lived here more than 600 years before there were any white men. It is hard for us to understand why the white men say our islands belong to them. We did not fight them.

In our council house there is a big paper on which the Number One Chief of the American Navy put his name. The paper says we are brothers in peace. *Insin en aramas!* Everyone is free now.

That is good. We hope the paper speaks true. *Inenin melel!* But for us, to be free means to be free in our fashion, not to be free in American fashion. Excuse me, but I will tell you about our ways. The big paper from the great *nanmarki* of the American Navy says that we

**Walter Karig**, a Commander in the Navy during the war, was editor and co-author of the semiofficial, three-volume naval history, *Battle Report*. He has since written a satire, *Zotz!*, and finished a book on the Pacific Islands.

shall keep our ways, but ever since he white man came to these islands he has been trying to destroy hem. He has tried to destroy our ways in anger, and to destroy them in kindness.

In his anger, the white man says our ways are not good for him. In kindness, he says our ways are not good for us. That is very funny. Can the white men agree among themselves which way is the best for the white man to live?

*Sau!* Not even when they speak about Jesus.

I will tell you about our ways.

This is a small atoll, Mokil. We have three islands: Urak, Manton, and Kalap. Our thirty-five families live on Kalap. On Urak we grow pigs and coconuts. On Manton we grow many things but no pigs. The lagoon has many fish and other creatures that are good to eat. All the work that is necessary for eating well, to have a good house, to

*The family boathouse: Mokil's center for work, training children, or gossip*



keep the village clean, can be done between the first meal and the second meal. Here nobody is poor and nobody is rich. Nobody is hungry and nobody is without a home. It is not so everywhere, I know.

The chief works the same as everybody else. All people belong to the chief, but all things belong to all the people. If a man's canoe be broken, his family does not go without fish.

The *nanmarki* must decide all questions between the people. If one person hurts another person's body, or his name, or what belongs to him, the chief must decide what is right. When a boy and girl want to marry, they must ask the chief.

But on questions that must be decided for all the people, the chief must listen to all the people. Then we meet in council and everybody says what he thinks. When there is agreement among the most, then the *nanmarki* says it shall be thus, and so it is. Then it is the law. A chief must know all the laws, even from hundreds of years ago.

You ask, what would happen if we had a bad chief? I do not think he would be *nanmarki* very long. Oh, no! I do not mean we would kill him. Maybe, in the old days, yes. Even then, a chief who did not please the people would be sent away to find another place to live. He and the people who believed

with him would be given food for their journey and be sent away in their canoes, then we would have a new chief. It would, maybe, be the old chief's brother or maybe the son of his mother's sister. For it is our custom that a man belongs to his mother's name. Who can be sure of his father?

But the new chief could be the old chief's son, if his wife was of the blood of chiefs.

When the Germans came here, these islands belonged to them. They said our custom was wrong. They said a man belonged to his father's name.

But before the Germans came there were the Spanish, and before the Spanish there were the Bostons. My grandmother told me about it. She, my *nonkalap*, had the story from her grandmother, who lived in those times more than a hundred years ago.

I will tell you that story. But first I want to ask you if this be true. I have heard it tell that it is the American custom that any man who wants to be chief promises the people a great feast. And then, on a day, all the American people write on a piece of paper which man they want to have for chief. And the man who has his name on the most papers is chief. You say that it is true?

I do not think that is a good way for the Island people. Among us, a man must begin to learn how

to be a chief when he is still a boy. It may be that there are three or five who are of the line of chiefs. The people watch them. Then, when the old chief dies, the council picks the one who will be the best chief.

I think your way is very good for your people. I think our way is best for us. I think if you tell us we must use the American custom now because we belong to America, we will say yes with our mouths, because you are stronger than us. but we will still use our own custom.

That is how we did it with the Germans, my mother and my grandmother tell me. But the Germans killed many people for not doing as they were told. Not here, but on Ponape. I will tell you that story as it was told to me.

Before the Germans were the Spanish, and before them, the Bostonians. There were two kinds of Bostonians. The first came to catch whales. They came in great ships which the old-time Island people called whales-with-wings. Excuse me, they were not stupid. They were making a joke. The Bostonians cooked the whales with much smoke in big pots, for the oil. They killed many Island people and took the women by force. They also killed many of themselves. They brought us cloth and knives to exchange for pearl shell and tortoise shell. They also brought

strange diseases which killed more people than the guns. They gave diseases to the women which made them unable to bear healthy children.

Then came other people from Boston and told our people about Jesus. They said that in Boston it was tabu for a woman to have her breasts and legs naked, and that was why the whale-killers took our women by force and made them sick. The missionaries told the Island people that if the women would cover their legs and breasts and pray to Jesus, they would not be harmed. The men did not want to be harmed either, and that is why we still put on clothes when a white man comes among us, or, if we do not have time, at least our women cover their breasts with their arms. Among ourselves, we still dress as is best for us. The clothes give us itching sores and when they get wet it makes us shake in the wind and maybe we get *cho-mapu*, the fever. And then the small children who do not wear any clothes at all, they, too, get the sores and the *cho-mapu*.

I am a Christian. I have a name from the Bible: Pensamin.\* Some of the people on Kusaie Island think you cannot be a Christian if you do not wear clothes all the time and if you dance at the

\*There are actually five "Pensamins" on Mokil atoll. The name is a century-old corruption of Benjamin. W. K.

*kamatip*—the feasts—and sing the old songs. But here we do not believe that, because here is not Boston, and now the American Navy says it is proper to dance and sing other songs than church songs. But the church songs are good. Some of them make you feel like dancing, too.

My grandmother told me that after the missionaries from Boston came, the other missionaries from Spain came to the islands. They said the islands belonged to them and that the Boston Jesus was not the real Jesus, so there was much fighting between the Bostons and the Spanish. But mostly only Island people got killed in these fights. It must have been hard to understand.

Then the Germans came and said the islands belonged to them, now. The Germans said the Island people must work all the time, and everybody must belong to his father's name. They said the chiefs must not decide what is right, by our customs, but that the Germans would decide for us according to the German custom. So, over on Ponape, in Jokaj, the people had a great meeting, and they agreed they would not do this.

So the German soldiers came and took the chief and tied him to a tree. And they beat him until blood fell like rain and his eyes turned white. With their hands and with fish-spears the Jokaj peo-

ple killed three of the German soldiers. Then the Germans sent to Truk where they had a big iron warship. The big guns smashed down Jokaj village. All of the line of chiefs were killed. All the rest of the people were put on ships and taken over the ocean to Palau. Never again did they see home.

It is better to be dead than never to see your home again.

That made everybody afraid of the Germans, in all the islands as far as ten days' sailing, and beyond. The Germans came to Mokil and to Pingelap and took men and women to live in Jokaj and to work there, building roads for the Germans to ride bicycles on.

First the Bostons, then the Spanish, then the Germans; each telling us now *they* own the islands, and *this* is the way we must do. And each told us different.

Then one day came the Japanese. I was still drinking my mother's milk and I do not remember. But the Japanese put all the Germans on a boat and took them over the sea, the way the Germans had done with the Jokaj people. And now the Japanese said they owned these islands, and we must do as they say, and bend in the middle when we meet them.

The Japanese say: Look, we are not white men. All white men are bad. We are your brothers. But they were brothers from a different mother. They made the Island

people work; make copra, make roads, and make caves in which the Japanese put big cannons.

We did not like this. We said *ma-kong-ia*, please excuse—we are unhappy—*insin-su-it*. So then, prison! And work all day much harder but no pay, and a man's wife and children had to seek food from the family.

So, many men ran away from prison, but when the Japanese caught one they tied him to an *oreng* tree, and all the other men in prison had to beat him with whips until the blood came and he could not cry out any more. And if a prisoner did not hit hard enough, the Japanese tied him to another tree and he was beaten the same way.

Then there was a big war. The Japanese are very happy. They say all American ships sunk, all English ships sunk.

Who cannot believe them?

Then one day the airplanes in the sky dropped bombs on Ponape. Everything burned up. Some Mokil men and Pingelap men on Ponape take canoes, quick, and go back to their islands. They say, It is not true what the Japanese said. The Americans are winning.

One day airplanes flew over this island. The men who had been on Ponape said they were American planes. They had the same totem marks on the wings. Everybody ran out of the houses to

dance. Then, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Seven times. People are dead. Houses burn.

Why? There are no Japanese on our island. Do American people hate all people who are not white, as the Japanese told us? We thought, The Japanese spoke true. The Americans want to kill us all.

When the American Navy people came here, we were very much afraid, but we did not look afraid. But the Americans were very good. They gave us candy and cigarettes and said, This island is very good. We would like to live here, too.

We said, *Melankanainen*, thank you very much. But we thought to ourselves, we hope you do not stay. Even after they gave the *nanmarki* the big paper which says, as you can see in the council house now, *insin en aramas*, everybody is free. We say to ourselves, If you truly speak from your hearts, then let us live in our way. Let us choose which of your ways we wish to follow. Teach us how American people live, and if some of their ways are good for us, we will use them. Let us think for ourselves. And, maybe, we can teach you some of our ways, too.

We wish to learn your speech, so we can read your books and learn for ourselves. We can make things that Americans cannot make—thick mats of pandanus and tortoise shell, hibiscus cloth

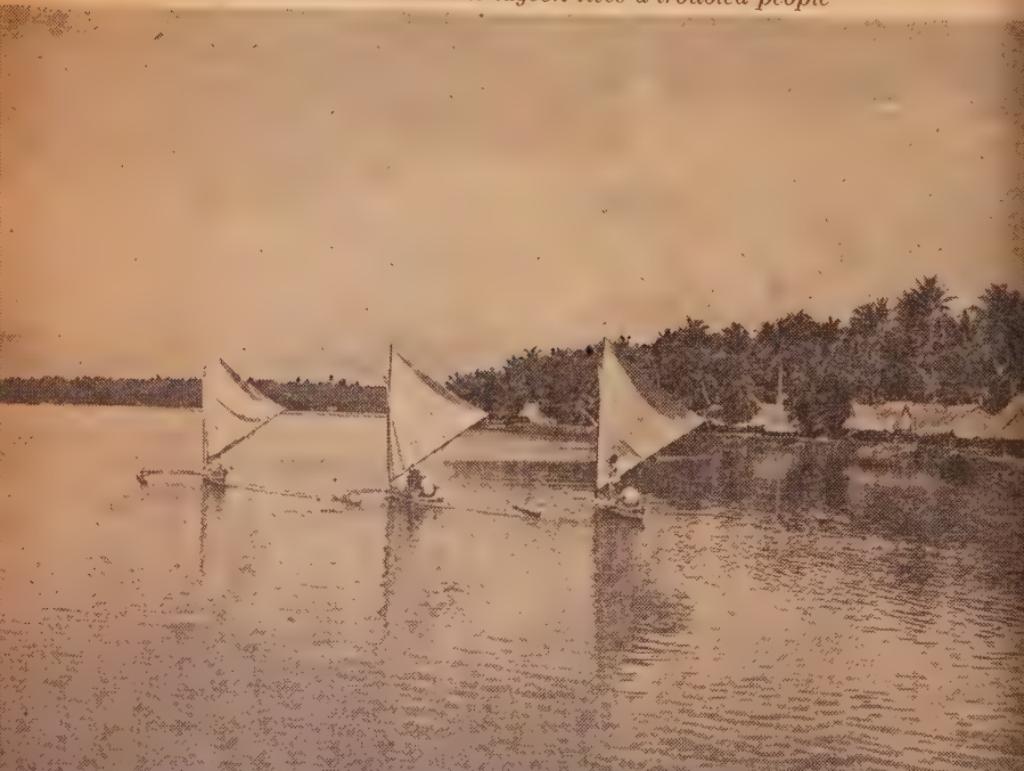
and feather fans. These we will exchange for the things we cannot make—cotton cloth and chisels and axes, needles, and scent to perfume the coconut oil we use on our bodies instead of clothes, when no white man is among us. For coconut oil keeps off the sun and the wind better than clothes, but it soon smells bad, unless it is scented.

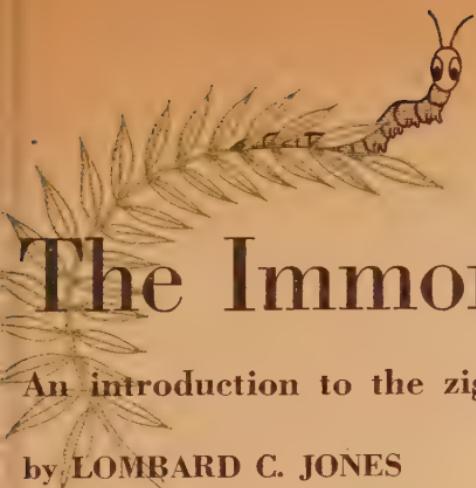
But do not tell us to choose our

chiefs by writing on paper, or make us belong to our father's name, because that is not our custom. We will work hard for what we need and what we want, but do not make us work to make you happy, for that is slavery, and we will get sick and die. What more work need a man do than to have a full belly on a soft bed under a tight roof, so he can enjoy laughter and song and love?

END

*Behind Mokil's serene lagoon lives a troubled people*





# The Immortal Mish

An introduction to the zigzag history of hanky-panky

by LOMBARD C. JONES

• Drawings by the author

**S**INCE the world is now torn by problems which are the result, we are told, of our lack of understanding of the words we use—or, as the experts say, our Semantic Failure—I have, as my contribution, made a careful investigation of the sources of nine extremely important English words. I found that by a remarkable coincidence each of these words was originally the name of an obscure but very interesting person. Feeling that these immortals have remained anonymous long enough, I have dug up, by diligent research, brief biographies of each.

**Lombard C. Jones** spent a dozen years as editor or art director for such magazines as the *New Yorker*, *Forum*, and *House Beautiful*. Here '48 presents him using all his literary and art weapons simultaneously.



• **JOHN HODGE** (1634-1692), English inventor of the podge, a machine for separating cockles from burs and making them into a nasty-tasting medicine for sufferers from heartburn. Hodge's Podge, or the Hodgepodge, as it came to be known, was so complicated a contrivance that, in 1659, the inventor decided to smash it—and did. "I thought thereby to simplify life," he told an angry

group of progressive citizens and stockholders who had come to see him pilloried for this destructive act. One hundred and fifty years later certain lexicographers, anxious to fill up a dictionary, decided to decapitalize the name, and without further thought put "hodge-podge" into common usage as a synonym for a stew, mixture, medley, or mess.

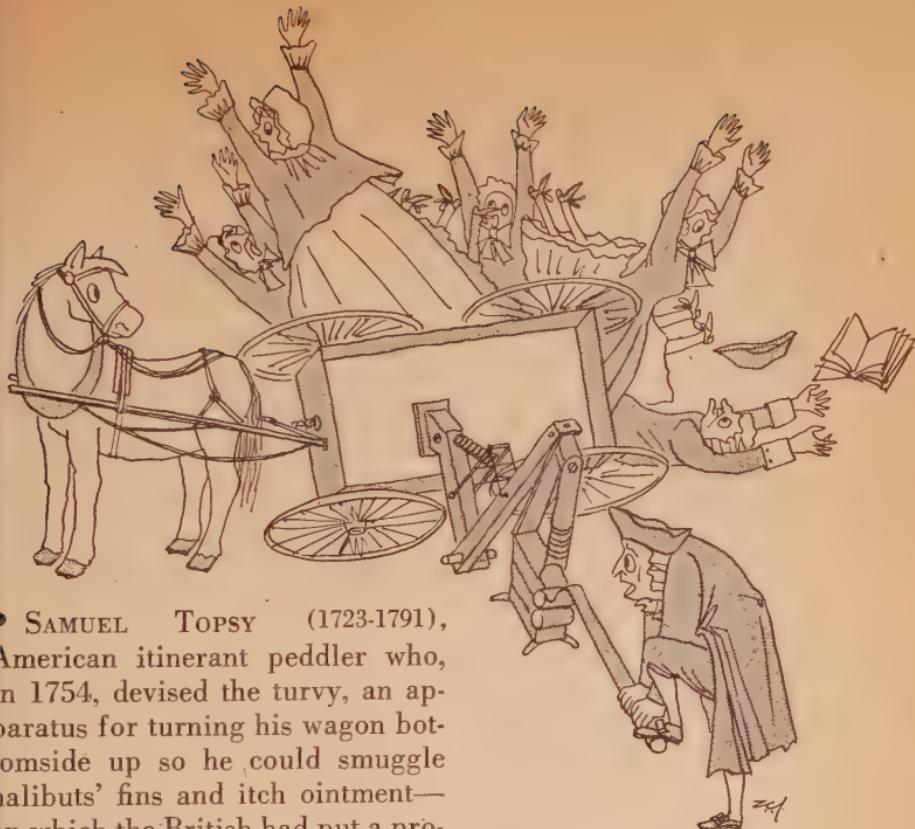
• HERMAN MISH (1803-1875), a Bavarian chemist whose experiments with manglewurzels, cabbages, malt, blue earth, hops, and walnut catsup led him to discover a brewer's mash which he marketed—with indifferent success because of inconsistent quality. In 1846 a brewer of Munich, one Wolfgang von Hubenfelder, bought a quantity of Mish's Mash,

as it was called, and brewed five vats of "a villainous, brown, and turbid liquor" which he processed as beer and ran off into kegs. With misgivings, he sold the lot to an innkeeper near Mannenschifferdingen. Soon afterward, strange tales came back to Von Hubenfelder about patrons of the inn who had drunk his brew. After a stein or two of the stuff, they would walk up the sides of the walls onto the ceiling and stay there, standing quietly upside down, like bats in a belfry. At first the innkeeper didn't mind, for the strange sight attracted more customers, and there was still plenty of room for *them* after *they* had drunk. But within five days there were neither new customers nor space on the ceiling.

At last the effects of the brew began to wear off and one by one, starting with the first imbibers, the patrons of the inn dropped heavily to the floor, head first, got up, brushed themselves off, and left in a huff. The innkeeper narrowly missed being hit by one of his falling customers and finally complained to Von Hubenfelder, ordering him to remove "the rest of the damnable, insidious beer from my establishment."

"'Twas all a horrible mish-mash," Herr von Hubenfelder wrote later, coining, in his agitation over the whole affair, a word for a thoroughly baffling, confused, and mixed-up situation.





• SAMUEL TOPSY (1723-1791), American itinerant peddler who, in 1754, devised the turvy, an apparatus for turning his wagon bottomside up so he could smuggle halibuts' fins and itch ointment—on which the British had put a prohibitively high tax—through Boston to the Worcester Turnpike. When he sighted a British patrol, Topsy would reach under the seat for his turvy, descend quickly, put it under the belly of the wagon, and—presto!—the whole thing would turn over, hiding its precious load and presenting an empty false bottom to the prying eyes of the Redcoats. One Sunday Topsy set out for church with the minister and eight good ladies of the parish in his wagon instead of the customary load. Spying a British patrol, he reacted instinctively, applied the turvy, and before he had time to realize and correct his mistake had turned every one over into the road.

"Topsy's turvy did upset us on the way to prayers this morning," announced the Reverend Ebenezer Thimble, explaining his late arrival to the congregation. And village wags soon had fashioned the word "topsy-turvy" to describe any ludicrous situation resembling that in which the minister and his eight female parishioners had found themselves under Topsy's inverted wagon, that Sunday in 1754.



• **SHADRACH MUMBO** (1375-1458?), a Bessarabian gypsy chieftain and practitioner of black magic. There is an obscure story to the effect that, while traveling through Bohemia, Mumbo asked the Evil One for something more powerful than fire and brimstone to use in his disappearing act. The Evil One at first demurred, but at last handed over to Mumbo a tremendous vial, all steaming and bubbling at the top. "You must use this carefully," he cautioned Mumbo. "Remember, it's a Jumbo."

Mumbo, ignorant of what the Evil One meant and anxious to make a big impression on the King of Bohemia, for whom he was giving a matinee performance of sleight of hand and conjuration, announced he was about to do a Jumbo. Whereupon he drank off the contents of the vial at a gulp, without even reading the directions, and promptly disappeared—forever—in a huge, pear-shaped

cloud flashing with iridescent fire. Panic-stricken, the king bowed down before the spectacle, crying madly, over and over, "Mumbo Jumbo! Mumbo Jumbo!"—words which have come to symbolize all objects of superstitious homage and fear.

• **ACHILLE ZIG** (1709-1771), Parisian physicist, discoverer of the zag. Before Monsieur Zig began his observations, lightning and other forms of unharnessed electricity were indicated pictorially by straight lines. After twenty years spent watching thunder storms and stroking an ebony rod with a piece of cat's fur, Monsieur Zig was able to prove to his own satisfaction, and that of the Royal Society in London, that electrical



discharges do not travel only in straight lines but, at short, sharp intervals, sag or "zag", as he put it in his quaint continental English. "Zig's Zag," as it was laughingly called then, has become today's "zigzag," an undisguised blessing to mural painters, sculptors, and

countless illustrators of pseudo-scientific books and the comic magazines.

- JOHAN SEBASTIAN HIGGLEDY (1306-1385), Flemish philosopher, first to observe the piggledy.



Those worthy few who have a flair for medieval Flemish lack perception indeed if they believe that *Das Piggledy*, by Johan Sebastian Higgledy, has only "charm" or "a fey touch." In this remarkable document Higgledy went to unprecedented lengths—ten manuscript volumes, 564 pages each, carefully documented, and hand-illuminated—to record a conversation he had on August 26, 1339, with a piggledy, or nether-world demon, he had discovered under his cot shortly after retiring.

It is somber reading. Flippant seventeenth-century scholars, impatient with the intricacies of Higgledy's style, coined the word "higgledy-piggledy" to cover their own confusion over his magnifi-

cent obscurity. Not much else is known about this great philosopher, whose influence has been so little appreciated.

- FREDERICK FIDDLE (1628-1689), hairdresser to certain English ladies at the court of Charles II. His shop is described by a contemporary diarist as being "at the Poll-in-Hand in Ramsbottom Street near the church of St. Vitus Invictus." One of the ladies who entrusted her "coiffing, curling, and pomading solely to Mr. Fiddle," namely, Lady Margaret Salt-sack, portrayed him thus in her memoirs: "Mr. Frederick Fiddle of the Poll-in-Hand is a little wren of a man, twittering brightly of nonsensical thynges as his hands fly deftly about my hair, like two birds building a nest." Mr. Fiddle had outlandish names for all the hairdos he created. The "Faddle" and the "Deedee" in particular so struck his clientele with merriment that they prefixed them with his



own name, thereby giving us to-day's "fiddle-faddle" and "fiddle-dee-dee," betokening trifling talk.



• **DAME MIRIAM HANKY** (1412-1472), a Scottish landlady of Edinburgh who had amazing conversational powers. Roderick MacGregor, a local wit, mentions her in his tavern song:

*Quhose<sup>1</sup> gab<sup>2</sup> can pyke<sup>3</sup> the  
clinking siller<sup>4</sup>*

*Fra<sup>5</sup> purse of farmer, cobbler,  
miller?*

*The pawkie<sup>6</sup> gab of auld<sup>7</sup> Dame  
Hanky*

*Quhose blethering<sup>8</sup> can steer<sup>9</sup> a  
panky.<sup>10</sup>*

The rest of the song describes how Dame Hanky holds her customers spellbound with a bewildering flood of gossip and small talk as she short-changes them and picks their pockets while they are gathered in the taproom. The city court records of September, 1472, mention the burning of this enterprising lady as a witch for "pyk-

ing pouchies<sup>11</sup> and mirksome her-  
ryment."<sup>12</sup> MacGregor celebrated  
the event less somberly with an-  
other song, *Hanky Wad<sup>13</sup> a Panky  
Play, a Feckless Hanky-Panky*, from  
which "hanky-panky" was soon carried over into the lan-  
guage to denote professional cant.

• **DR. MURAD ABDULLAH ABRA** (1045-1128), a Seljuk Turk of Da-  
mascus who devised the cadabra,  
an instrument for transcribing the  
words of whirling dervishes. Some  
of the better known words taken  
down by Abra's Cadabra, or Abra-  
cadabra (the name preferred by  
reputable Islamic scholars), are:  
*crivet, epilax, snickbiddy, nod-  
neddy, nannygag, mudge, fricfrac,  
pilldibble, jogglebug, nobgobble,  
and yoo-hoo.* For over fifty years  
Dr. Abra used his cadabra to re-  
cord words like these on amulets,  
which he sold, claiming they would  
prevent all diseases known to man.  
Dr. Abra's medical reputation suf-  
fered somewhat during an epidemic  
of Seljukian mumps in 1105.  
When he died, "abracadabra" had  
long since become a byword for  
mystical jargon or gibberish. **END**



1. whose 2. mouth 3. steal 4. silver 5.  
from 6. sly 7. old 8. nonsense-talking 9.  
stir up 10. bewitchment 11. picking  
pockets 12. dark spoliation 13. would.



## Vincent Sheean in search of man

Marx, Rome, Freud, and alcohol have been suggested as cures for his unfulfilled greatness

By Edmond Taylor

SHORTLY BEFORE Ernest Hemingway went into action in the late war as a correspondent (Hemingway style) he made a will which included a bequest to his old friend and fellow ex-correspondent, Vincent Sheean. The bequest was the first thirty-seven versions of the close of *A Farewell To Arms*, and twenty-five cents.

In Hemingway's mind the purpose of this interesting bequest was inspirational rather than sentimental. He has long regarded Sheean as an important writer of relatively unimportant books, and

by bequeathing to his friend the record of the infinite pains which constitute his own genius, intended thereby to place in Sheean's hands the key to greatness.

(The cash bequest along with the manuscript was added, after careful deliberation on Heming-

**Edmond Taylor** first met Vincent Sheean while both of them were reporting the Spanish Civil War as correspondents. After covering Europe from 1928 to 1940, Taylor wrote *Strategy of Terror*, which helped awaken America to Axis psychological warfare. He then served in intelligence posts in the Far East, which resulted in his recent *Richer by Asia*, a study of Oriental culture.

way's part, upon Sheean's insistence that he needed a financial incentive, in addition to a high example).

Hemingway was neither the first nor the last to diagnose Sheean's literary condition as a case of frustrated or unfulfilled greatness and to propose drastic therapy of some sort. Sheean is constantly being lectured by various Dutch Uncles and other well-wishers, who assure him that he is not a great writer, but could be if—.

Catholic friends urge him to embrace the faith of his fathers and become a kind of twentieth-century Augustine—a development which could hardly fail to confuse Dartmouth students who have been exposed to that institution's course in autobiography: "From St. Augustine to Vincent Sheean."

Jewish friends think it might help if Sheean would undergo psychiatric treatment for that curious Arab fixation of his (justice for the Arab population of Palestine has for many years been one of his minor, but passionate and persistent crusades).

Communist friends — misinterpreting the fact that he continues to speak to them and not noticing that he does so only in public—periodically attempt to convince him that he needs the Party as much as the Party needs him (though they have had to cease assuring him that it would instantly

transform him from a horrible example of bourgeois decadence and liberal dilettantism into an American Malraux).

Other more ruggedly individualistic well-wishers have proposed still other panaceas. Some, like Hemingway, think his prose style lacks depth because writing comes too easily to him; others suspect he works at it too hard. A good many adjure him to forsake the tables of the famous and the wealthy—people for whom he has an obvious, unashamed, but by no means uncritical admiration—and retire to a garret for Art's Sake. One of Sheean's most glittering friends has suggested a still more drastic solution to his literary and other problems: "Sheean should get himself half-drunk on good brandy and stay that way for fifty years." This glittering friend's name was Winston Churchill.

The reason for all this flattering and censorious concern, for this widespread feeling that Sheean's literary soul both needs and is worth saving, lies in the curious, irregular curve of his career as a writer. When not yet thirty-six he wrote a book, *Personal History*, which though it may not have been great, had on his contemporaries the effect that only great books normally have. It had a profound influence upon the minds of a whole generation of young Amer-

icans; it founded a school of writing — youthful autobiography; launched a new trend in journalism—coverage of ideological conflict; and above all brought to full consciousness a significant element in the intellectual life of modern man in the West—the awareness of history as a personal process.

Considered simply as social history, weighed in the scale of cultural influence, *Personal History* was a highly important book, a major act of intellectual leadership by a young man with the most fruitful phase of his career as a thinker and writer still ahead of him. It was followed by a series of novels—*Sanfelice* and *A Day of Battle* were the outstanding ones—which were hardly more than semisuccesses, and by three sequels to *Personal History*—*Not Peace but a Sword*, *Between the Thunder and the Sun*, and *This House Against This House*—which confirmed the validity of Sheean's first great success, even showed flashes of significant growth, but somehow failed to consolidate his position as a mature writer.

NOW IN HIS middle forties, with fourteen published books to his credit, Sheean stands very much where he stood ten years ago. His latest novel, *A Certain Rich Man*, is one of his most thoughtful and deep-probing efforts in fiction, but Sheean himself

does not appear to feel that it can add substantially to his literary stature. Seldom in American letters has a writer revealed so much promise for so many years without either quite fulfilling or finally negating it. The explanation of such a puzzling phenomenon—if it can be found—will hardly fail to throw some light upon the whole problem of artistic creation in our society.

The best place to seek a possible key to this literary puzzle is in the personality of Sheean himself. Tall, trim, ruddy, at once athletic and flabby, boyish and middle-aged, with the face of a slightly bacchic angel topped by a bald spot that produces almost the effect of a monkish tonsure, Sheean contains an almost incredible variety of contradictory enthusiasms, interests, appetites, and prejudices. Instead of clashing, these seem to gallop off in all directions like a pack of zestful hounds. He is passionately devoted to peace, music, money, the Air Force, his own integrity as a writer, America, high living, high thinking, German philosophy, English poetry (including Tennyson), the late Spanish Republic, the historical intersection of the general and the particular, the Arabs, freedom, and humanity. He detests psychiatry, Zionism, race prejudice, fascism, treason, poverty, de Gaulle, and boredom. He admires Gandhi,

Churchill, Spengler, Roosevelt, Trotsky, Dorothy Thompson, the State Department's Bob Murphy, and himself.

All of these diverse facets of his personality—and many others—are reflected in his writings as well as in his conversation. One is tempted at first to name mere self-cancellation and diffusion as the reasons for his failure to realize all the potentialities of his enormous talent. Yet beneath Sheean's seeming incoherence there is a strong unifying principle. All the hounds of Sheean's thought, though they may seem to run in circles, are on the same trail—the trail of man.

He is not concerned, as most of the great novelists have been, with plumbing the depths or scaling the heights of man. Sheean's genius is simply for the discovery of man; for tracking down the human particular in the wilderness of the inhuman general; for penetrating the disguises under which men conceal their brotherhood; for recognizing the half-effaced spoor of man in the jungles of the remote and in the Saharas of the past, in the caves of the Riffi, under the rags and squalor of the Palestinian Arab, in the revolutionary turmoil of China, on the battlefields of Spain, even in the mess halls and staff rooms of the Air Force, even at the council tables of international diplomacy.

He is a remarkable detective, a tireless prospector of man.

Sheean's talent is essentially a journalistic one. He is the reporter who never fails to find the human angle in the story. But in his novels this achievement does not seem striking, for it is too obvious. It is not a striking revelation to discover in *A Certain Rich Man* that wealthy philanthropists, Negro idealists, brick-faced Anglo-American countesses, refugees from café society, social workers, and neurotic governesses are all human beings.

ON THE OTHER HAND, in *This House Against This House*, the "Tiger," ashamed of the wild birds he had slaughtered in his sporting youth, but blind to the misery of the German people, snarled at the delegate of his defeated enemies and sowed the dragon's teeth of a new world war. This is a striking revelation. It is not merely embellishing the interpretation of history with "color," but it is also humanizing history, making it intelligible as a human process. By doing so, Sheean throws a brilliant light upon the human implications of war and peace. If literature derives its importance from its social function, then the writing that Sheean does when he is throwing light upon the problems of war and peace is among the most significant of our period.

The trouble is, the light sometimes flickers, the detective is baffled by his clues, the humanizer of history succumbs to its inhumanity. These are the times when Sheean is having trouble with what he calls his Trinity of Jewish Doctors—Marx, Freud, and Einstein. They worry him a lot, these three. A coherent view of the modern world, as Sheean sees the problem, must somehow syncretize and reconcile not only the viewpoints of these doctors, but the social implications of their discoveries as well.

The doctors seem to be sitting like judges appraising Sheean's great discoveries, his findings concerning man, and sneering in their beards.

To love man and the works of man, to marvel ceaselessly at the infinite variety of human affirmation, to be stirred and reassured by every scrap of human evidence as a dog is by the strong scent of canine participation in nature, to wander over the face of our planet continually bearing witness that it is, indeed, the home of man—these, Sheean feels, are not enough for a writer. A mere appreciation of man is not enough, it is not intellectually respectable. There must be a theory of man, an ideology, a long view (even if the view, simply because it is long, necessarily makes men look like beetles and causes their individual

problems to seem like beetle-problems).

In his youth, Sheean thought that he had found in orthodox Marxism the long view of humanity that he needed. He could not hold it permanently—though he still considers himself a socialist materialist—because he could not learn to see men as beetles. The same inability to see men as beetles and be casual about forces which crush them has prevented him from exchanging Marxism for another of the savage beetle-orthodoxies of our day, as have many of his contemporaries. At heart he is and always has been an old-fashioned democrat, but he values democracy for the kind of human beings that it can fashion, not for the pretexts it provides for slaughtering its adversaries. He has an instinctive, very simple kind of patriotism, but he does not look upon the flag of his country as a handy hypnotic aid for conditioning his fellow citizens to mass suicide. He believes in world government as a goal but does not believe in risking the destruction of our star to achieve it. He has a growing interest in religion, for all his socialist materialism, but his interest turns to repulsion whenever he hears the followers of the cross preaching an atomic crusade for the greater glory of God.

In short, Sheean is a wayward, frivolous, sentimental, naive Irish-

man who writes like an angel because he cannot help himself, is thoroughly out of step with his times, and, for all his self-admiration, is secretly ashamed of this fact. He struggles valiantly to overcome the handicap of his humanity and sensitivity. He is sometimes able to write, for a few paragraphs, like a monster instead of an angel. He has tried successively to be an unflinching revolutionary, an uncompromising antifascist, a Machiavelli of the Four Freedoms, an amateur Clausewitz of the American Century. When all else fails, he tries to pass himself off as a kind of literary Talleyrand, a lover of humanity in a cynical disguise, an idealist preaching peace on earth, good will to men, in the iron jargon of power politics.

IT WOULD BE unfair to blame Sheean for trying to make himself into a monster, considering the society into which he was born; if he had rebelled more explicitly against his destiny—if he had made it clear, for instance, that *Personal History* was really concerned with nothing more important than the discovery of man—it is possible that nobody would ever have taken him seriously.

Whatever he does, he cannot escape permanently into greatness, into inhumanity. His books are full of apologies for this. He apolo-

gized in *Personal History* for not being tough enough to join the Communist Party. He needed to make it quite clear in *This House Against This House* that when he saved the cathedral at Palermo from the enthusiasm of his Air Force friends, it was useful from the viewpoint of psychological warfare. His hero in *A Certain Rich Man* wants everybody to understand that he expects a decent capitalist profit from his model housing project for Negroes.

Sheean is always in some way a rebel against the society which produced him. But he has seemingly never questioned the Moloch-tradition and the Frankenstein-factor in modern Western culture—the tradition that measures the importance of a thinker or artist by his ability to make some abstraction seem more important than the mind from which it arose or the men to whom it refers.

He assumes it is his duty to be a monster, like most of his contemporaries; he tries to be one, and since he is gifted and many-sided, he achieves some measure of success, and is applauded and recognized as important for it. He is too human to be a great monster, for which he has to apologize, but in trying so hard to be one he has necessarily had to neglect the cultivation of his own humanity—a fact that may account for the im-

ression of unfulfilled greatness in  
s writings.

It is unnecessary to pity Sheean  
or being out of step with his  
mes, because it may be that he  
a precursor, even of himself.  
erhaps his time has only now  
ome. Perhaps he, and all of us,  
ave been waiting all these years  
or one of his Three Jewish Doc-  
ors to enable the monsters to arm  
emselves with the weapon of fi-

nal destruction, so that we can  
recognize them as monsters and  
throw off at last the sinister al-  
legiances that have made us traitors  
to ourselves and traitors to  
mankind.

Perhaps Vincent Sheean is the  
type of intensely human writer  
who can only fulfill himself, and  
only be fully appreciated, when  
humanity stands in the shadow of  
the glacier.

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# THE ICEMAN COMETH À GRANDE VITESSE

*Les Canadiens* have lost their accents but  
their speed, *zut alors*, that they still have

By John Kieran • Photographs by Hy Peskin

NAME OF A PIPE! Ice hockey is a game best played with much *élan* and a French-Canadian accent. At least, that's my rooted opinion after a score of years as a rink-sider watching the winter battles on skates in big league circles. Always I have been a rooter for the Montreal Canadiens, the famous Habitants, and I regret to report a change in their line-up that is not for the better, as I view it. I remember when the roster of the Flying Frenchmen implied that the dashing team came by its nickname through honest heritage. Once upon a time there was a Stanley Cup line-up of *Les Canadiens* that included Silvio Mantha, Armand Mondou, "Pit" Lepine, "Al-bear" (Battleship) Leduc, Wildor Larochelle, Aurel Joliat, and Howie Morenz, *Zut alors, M'sieu!* Figure to yourself how the Montreal Forum rang to the cheers when those chaps dashed about the ice à grande vitesse, crashing

their rivals into the boards or draping them over the dasher with *éclat* to the delight of the home rooters for the Habitants.

Now consider the situation. *Où en sommes-nous, messieurs?* Whither are we drifting? I look icewards and I see that the Habitants include such players as Billy Durnan, Kenny Reardon, Toe Blake—*mais, c'est une belle farce, quoi!* All this is not in the tradition to which I was accustomed, and I wish to file a protest at some *Bureau de Réclamation* if I can find one open at this hour.

I hope there have been no other changes of a serious nature in the home team's hockey at the Forum. That's the house of hockey where the pews quite regularly are not only rented by the season but passed down from gen-

*Hockey fans are not against people who push other people around. All that Boston's Kenny Smith (left) and Joe Cooper, then of New York, were trying to do was please the crowd*





*Hockey is the fastest—and roughest—sport men play without the aid of wings or wheels. As proof, witness (above) the Montreal Canadiens' Buddy O'Connor (now with the New York Rangers) swinging over the Rangers' Grant Warwick. Below, Jim Thomson, Toronto, is pursued along the boards by Ranger Bill Juzda*



eration to generation—devised and bequeathed by due process of testamentary law. Here summary justice might be executed on some alien player who was new to the locale and had the audacity to use the butt end of his stick on the ribs of a home player or roughly hoist one of the Habitants into the third row of spectators. *Fichitre!* There were "strong points" of hot-tempered rooters scattered around the arena just behind the dasher and it was no trick at all to herd the offending visitor sooner or later into an area along the barrier where the friends, relatives, or admiring neighbors of the injured home player could reach out and take a few freehanded swipes at the alien scoundrel on skates. *Vive le sport!*

I can't say that the traditional speed of the Habitants has decreased to any noticeable extent with the change in the type of name on the playing roster. It's still one of the fastest teams in a game that is the fastest played by human beings without the aid of animal or mechanical equipment. The Habitants of today have the speed and finesse of the famous Flying Frenchmen of old, but I miss the background *bouquet*, so to speak, that used to go with a Habitant player named, for instance, Louis Napoleon Trudel. The older Habitants of hockey had the fine flavor that goes with the

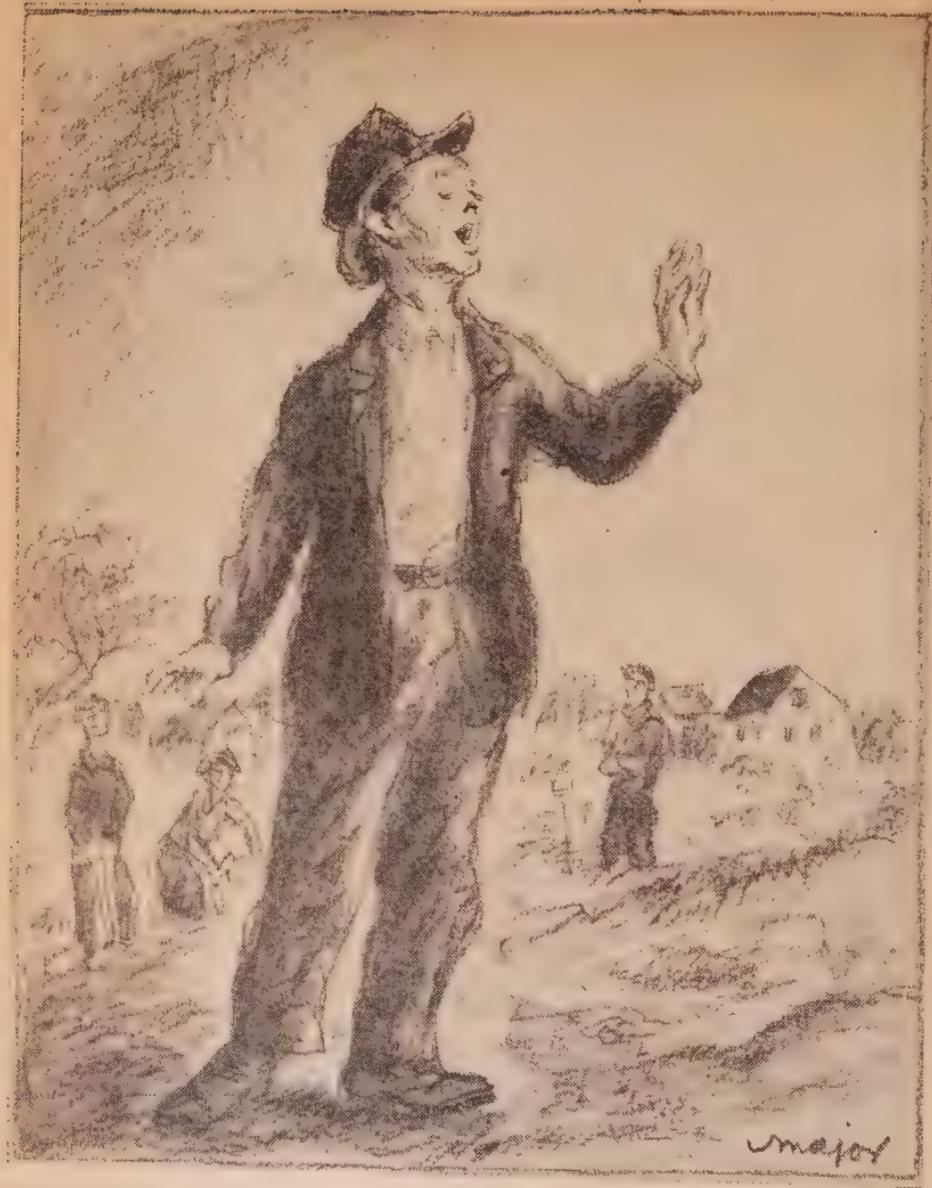
Dodgers in big league baseball. Nobody knows why decking out a ball player in a Brooklyn uniform inspires him to the performance of bizarre feats on the diamond, but such is the record of baseball history for the past thirty years.

So the hockey rooters looked for dash and color among the Habitants, the Flying Frenchmen, and seldom were the fans disappointed. Les Canadiens, backed enthusiastically by the *ici-l'on-parle-français* section of the Mon'real citizenry, played fast and furious hockey. They won and they lost, they flared up and flourished their sticks around enemy sconces, they reached championship heights and fell back with almost as much speed as they went forward, but always they were "Les Canadiens," and for years they carried the names to prove it. Now they have these skaters — *voyons!* — named Kenny Reardon and Johnny Quilty — *quelle horreur!* — and Toe Blake, and it doesn't seem right to me. And in the nets — *les filets, bagosh!* — they have Billy Durnan whose name is not French by a long shot.

It was certainly not like that in the *vieux temps, messieurs. J'en suis désolé.*

END

**John Kieran** was a sports columnist for the *New York Times* for many years before he became goalee on *Information, Please!*, editor of an almanac, and author of engaging books on nature.



*“Domney nonsum dignis!” Feeley yelled. “O Babylon, O baboons!”*

# The Scoundrel with the Dandelions

Ah, the one true scholar  
was Francis Xavier Feeley

*A story by Edward McSorley*

WHEN HE SAT out in front of the garage of an evening in the springtime, his chair tilted back against the wall, Mr. Beggins might have been one of the firemen from the station house next door. In fact, many a one passing through 72nd Street thought he was one of them. The firemen would always be there with him and Mr. Beggins felt that he was, in a manner of speaking, very close to them, what with his work on the ambulances and hearses. He liked to watch the bright red trucks roll out on the bells and he had them timed on his big gold watch. Mr. Beggins took great pride in the fire trucks, almost as much as he did in his own cars.

It was always a pleasure to converse with intelligent men, Mr. Beggins often told Ambrose Keliher. Why, them firemen has had examinations of every kind and description, examinations right and left on every subject under the sun. They were grand lads every one, too, not above putting a pound on the horses now and then when the fancy took them. All on the q.t., of course, and no one the wiser.

A new man came to the house about the middle of May but he didn't seem to be of a very friendly nature like the rest of them, though Mr. Beggins had a notion he was some kind of a scholar for he never seen him going home or coming in that he

**Edward McSorley** says of himself: "Wrote more thousands of words for newspapers than I care to remember. Did publicity writing for everything from vaudeville to Irish agitators. Also went to sea, fished, farmed. Have lived mostly around New England. Now working on a book."

hadn't a book or two under his arm. Well, there's something shy about a scholar until you get to know them and they run deep. Still and all the man might pass the time of day. The lieutenant said the new man's name was Feeley, Arthur Feeley, and that he was a Fordham graduate. Mr. Beggins said the only Feeley he knew himself was an educated man and a great one with the foreign lingoes. There was all kinds of college men getting into the department these days and on the police force, too, the lieutenant said. They were all bound to get ahead, too, he said, and the smartest of them were the Fordham boys.

Mr. Beggins could hardly wait for the day he'd get hold of Feeley and try him out on the foreign lingoes. He made it a point to be sitting out there in front at times when he thought Feeley would be going across the street to the candy store for an ice-cream cone and he didn't think too much of a grown man who would be eating those things, scholar or no scholar. Feeley never cashed his checks in McGrath's the way the other lads did and Mr. Beggins was sure he didn't bring them to the cut-rate joint on Broadway that had a big high sandwich stand in the front and the smell of two-day-old cabbage hanging over it day and night.

But that's the way they are sometimes, craftier than a man would think. They have a long head on them and they're sly enough to bank the check itself without ever bringing it to the bar and they'll be plotting and planning things out ahead of time. No harm in that, he told Ambrose Keliher, if not carried to extremes. Mr. Beggins had seen that happen many's a time and he hoped young Feeley wouldn't turn out to be that kind.

VERY CASUALLY, the first time he saw him standing alone in front of the house, Mr. Beggins said, "Ah there, Feeley." "Hello," the fireman answered, wondering who the old buck was and how he happened to know the name.

One noon a few days later when he was returning from the coffeepot after putting away a good meal Mr. Beggins saw the fireman again. This time he said:

"How is the scholar today?"

Mr. Beggins hardly looked in his direction when he said it and didn't slow down his steps. Feeley didn't know quite what to make of it. Then again he had to be careful because the old man might be someone's uncle or even his father. Feeley did go so far though as to ask the lieutenant what the old man's name was and what he did. Crossing the street that night with his ice-cream cone in his hand Feeley saw Mr. Beggins sitting outside with his pipe in his mouth, his chair resting against the wall. Feeley said hello.

"Ah there, Foley," Mr. Beggins said amiably.

"Feeley," the fireman said.

"Feeley, then," said Mr. Beggins. "I never knew but one Feeley in all my life. Francis Xavier Feeley. No kin of yours, I suppose, Francis Xavier Feeley?"

"Could be," Feeley said. "There's a lot of Feeleys in the world."

"Only the one Francis Xavier," Mr. Beggins said abruptly. "He was a great one with the foreign lingoes. Is that the one you . . . ah, I suppose not. No. That's many years ago. They tell me you're quite the scholar yourself."

"Who told you that?" Feeley asked.

"Oh, this one and that one. Word gets around, you know. I see you lugging them books back and forth all the time, too. Deep subjects, I suppose?"

"Oh—some things I was reading."

"Reading up on all kinds of things. Well, that's the difference in scholars, I suppose," Mr. Beggins shook his head and gave the fireman a look that was touched with a little pity. "With Feeley—Francis Xavier, that is—it was the other way around. 'Twas all right there in his head and he out with it when you'd least expect it. He had never to turn to page so and so when a thing came up. Married man are you?"

"Wh . . . yes, I am."

"Francis Xavier was not," Mr. Beggins said with finality. "Scholars seldom is. Well, goodnight, now."

That would hold his nibs for a while, Mr. Beggins thought as he walked over to the throne room. It's the first punch that

counts in all things whether it's in the ring or out of it and the same all through life. The man that lets the other fellow get in the first punch is licked to start with. Get in the first punch and you're safe.

"They tell me you was way up at the head of the class, Feeley, when you was a scholar there at Villanova," Mr. Beggins said the next time they met. "That's a grand school, Villanova. . . ."

"I went to Fordham," Feeley said.

"So it was," Mr. Beggins said. "Well, for teachers now there's none like the Dominicans. That's a great order. . . ."

"The Jesuits. . . ." Feeley began.

"I know," Mr. Beggins said affably. "I meant the Dominicans there at Villanova. There's no greater teachers on the face of the earth than the Dominicans, you know. Pious, learned men. No secret diplomacy about a Dominican, you know. Out with it whatever it is, that's the Dominicans' way at all times. Francis Xavier swore by the Dominicans. Teachers or preachers, he'd say, there's none like them."

"What did your friend do?" the fireman asked. "Was he a business man?"

"**F**EELEY WAS a plain simple man like ourselves," Mr. Beggins said. "Never one to make a show of his learning, you know, though he had it there on the tip of his tongue. I'll never forget the first time ever I see Feeley. I wasn't long out here at the time and I hired myself out for a teamster up there in the country. Sure it was halfway to Albany and they were building a road there. It was half a day's trip on the train to get there and a tramp for miles and miles in the pouring rain from the railroad out to the camp.

"They had a camp in the woods and a pretty place in fair weather when I had a look at it the next morning in the sunshine but that day was a holy terror. I was wet to my skin and when I got into the place it was full, for there was no working in that deluge. There was singing going on and drinking, too, for the boss of the camp made himself a penny or two on that, see. I couldn't understand a word of what was being said or

ung and I went down along a big table was there in the middle  
the stove and who do I see across the table but Feeley. . . .”  
“Did you know him?” the fireman asked.

**A**IN’T THAT WHAT I’m telling you? He was across the table taking no part in the roaring going on and whilst I was ringing myself out I says to him it was a damp day on the outside. Feeley says it was indeed and would I have a drop of something to warm me and I says I would if I had it. Well, it seems he had one with him and he come around the table and sat down on a bench near the stove and we had one or two. We struck up a friendship on the spot, for Feeley was perishing with loneliness here and had none of his own to talk to. Not that he couldn’t. Feeley says, for he was on to their foreign lingo and all, but he couldn’t bring himself to talk with them baboons, as he called them, nor lower himself that much. . . .”

“Was he the engineer?” asked the fireman.

“And he a greenhorn? Feeley was engineering a pick and shovel like the rest. . . .”

“An educated man? Swinging a pick? That seems funny,” the fireman declared.

“So it does,” Mr. Beggins said tolerantly. “Ah, it’s the same as yourself. Why didn’t you strike in as the Fire Commissioner, then, and you born here—Francis Xavier and me was as thick as thieves before you’d know it and he telling me all about the place we was in. It’s teeming with foreigners, says he, and all you have to do is listen to them screeching there and bellowing their lungs out and you’d know they was never cut out to do a day’s work if they could dodge it. They have one of their own for a boss, see, says Feeley, and they do as they please. There’s a scoundrel among them—do you see the bird down there with the mustaches as big as his shoulders, the tiny one stuffing the heel of bread into his mouth as though he never eat before in his life? That’s him, Feeley says, and what do you think he’s up to every day in the week? What d’you think he’s up to?”

“Feeley says he had an eye on that one from the first day there. He see him in the morning when all hands left the camp

and he see the rascal walking out with a sack under his arm and thought there was something going on, he didn't clap an eye on him again all morning. Well, Feeley told me the same thing went on day after day until he was sick and tired of it out there breaking his back and this one disappearing every morning and never a word said to him until Feeley decided wherever the scoundrel was off to mornings he'd track him down and see what it was that one was doing with the sack.

“**Y**OU COULD HARDLY hear Feeley speak what with the noise they were making with their songs and one of them pick, pick, picking on some stringy thing whilst he was thumping a foot on the floor till Feeley could stand no more of it and I was deafened myself by it. I says to Feeley I wish we had more of this and we'd drown it out and he says it was the last drop he had. He was that mad, see, and says if we couldn't drown it out we could *drive* it out, but there was too many of them there for that, I says to Feeley. Come, says Feeley, we'll clear the camp, Beggins, he says. But he was always a reasonable man, too, for all his disgust with them and all right, he says, then we'll drown them out with a song they never heard in all their days. Well, up he got in the middle of one of their come-all-ye's, puts his back to the wall and pounds with the foot on the floor to silence them. Then he began to sing with his eyes closed in the sweetest voice you'd hear in a man:

*Sitting by O'Reilly's fireside  
Drinking O'Reilly's rum and water  
Suddenly the thought  
Lep across my mind  
I'd like to shag O'Reilly's daughter—*

*Jig, jigajig for the one-eyed Reilly  
Jig, jigajig, tre bum—*

“And he sang every word and every verse to it, too, with chorus and all. Would they give him a cheer when he was done,

ough, not that crew and Feeley was fuming with rage when sat down with me again. He might have sung to the stones the road and God knows there was enough of them, too. "Wait now, till I tell you how Feeley got the best of them in morning and he sick and half dead himself whilst I was putting the horse in one of the tipcarts. The carts was lugging away the stone from them walls they have in the fields there. You'd kick the tipcart up to the wall, see, and the men would put the stones in and you'd drive them down to the road, some big and some small. Feeley was there with the gang of them when I tracked up and he says did he tell me the day before what the scoundrel was up to sneaking off with the sack day after day and I says no, he didn't.

"Well, it was *dandelions* he was after, Feeley yelled to me and you could hear him above the crashing of the stones into the cart. It was dandelions he was after, says Feeley, and that's what you'll have for your dinner—dandelions. Did you ever eat dandelions, he yelled. Well, you'll eat them today, he says, and you might as well chew on grass like a beast of the field as eat the damn things. It was a daring thing for him to say. The rest of them knew what he was talking about all right and every last man of them was a dandelion eater. They were looking at Feeley as though they wanted to tear him apart. I tracked him down, Feeley shouted to me, and there he was plucking dandelions, plucking the dandelions and tucking them in the sack.

"IT'S AS MUCH as I can do, Feeley roared, picking up a stone no bigger than your fist and staggering over to the cart with it, it's as much as I can lift, for I'm fed dandelions. They bribe the boss with dandelions and that's what I'm fed. The little scoundrel he was talking about says something in their gibberish and laid hold of a stone as big as himself and into the cart with it, screaming at the top of his lungs at Feeley, and the others shaking their fists at him.

"I see Feeley lift up the biggest piece of rock ever a man took in his arms and I was afraid he'd never make it as far as the tipcart with it, but he did and it took a mighty heave for him

to get it up on the rim of the wheel. It was that big they stopped their chattering and stared at Feeley whilst he stood there with the rock balanced on the wheel and pushed it up and into the cart. Be God he turned on them like a lion and let a roar out of him that frightened the horse so I thought he'd lep out of the shafts, but I held him in and Feeley cried, with his arm up and his finger jabbing at the sky, '*Domney nonsum diginis! Domney nonsum diginis! Agus honora na Eirrean! O Babylon, O ba-boons, domney nonsum diginis. . . ?*'

"Is that Latin?" the fireman asked.

"It is," Mr. Beggins said, gasping a little. "It is Latin."

"It's a dead language," the fireman said absently. "I never studied it."

"Ah, sure, Feeley," Mr. Beggins halted and drilled his eyes into the fireman. "Dead and buried. Dead as the holy sacrifice of the Mass, ain't it, Feeley?"

"Oh, well," Feeley said, "that's different. That's altogether different."

Mr. Beggins shook his head. It was plain as the nose on a face that there was only one true scholar among the Feeleys, and his name was Francis Xavier.

END



*Pre-print*

**Tobacco Juice Diplomacy**

Some years ago a President sent as Minister to Persia, a Southwestern politician whose name was written large in the frontier annals of his state. When he first arrived he went a number of times to gatherings in the home of an influential and cultured Englishwoman. But after a few months, these invitations abruptly ceased. Discussing the situation with a friend, the English hostess agreed that the Minister was, indeed, a colorful personality; she regretted not being able to invite him, but his aim was so bad when he spit tobacco juice that he was rapidly ruining her lovely Persian carpets and she did not think his company worth the sacrifice.

These legendary personalities did not all serve long ago. It is only a few years since the chief of mission at a Latin American post made a practice of walking around the house naked, continually trailed by a native girl bearing a tray of Scotch whiskey, soda, and ice.

—**J. Rives Childs**

From "The American Foreign Service," Henry Holt & Co. To be published this month.

## Two poems by Stephen Spender

### ON THE THIRD DAY

*(To W. H. Auden)*

On the first summer day I lay in the valley.  
Above rocks the sky sealed my eyes with a leaf.  
The grass licked my skin. The flowers bound my nostrils  
With scented cotton threads. The soil invited  
My hands and feet to grow down and have roots.  
Bees and grasshoppers drummed over  
Crepitations of thirst rising from dry stones,  
And the ants rearranged my ceaseless thoughts  
Into different patterns forever the same.  
Then the blue wind fell out of the air  
And the sun hammered down till I became of wood  
Glistening brown beginning to warp.

On the second summer day I climbed through the forest's  
Huge tent pegged to the mountainside by roots.  
My direction was cancelled by that great sum of trees.  
Here darkness lay under the leaves in a war  
Against light, which occasionally penetrated  
Splintering spears through several interstices  
And dropping white clanging shields on the soil.  
Silence was stitched through with thinnest pine needles,  
And bird songs were stifled behind a hot hedge.  
My feet became as heavy as logs.  
I drank up all the air of the forest.  
My mind changed to amber transfixed with dead flies.

On the third summer day I sprang from the forest  
Into the wonder of a white snowtide.  
Alone with the sun's wild whispering wheel,  
Grinding seeds of secret light on frozen fields,  
Every burden fell from me, the forest from my back,  
The valley dwindled to bewildering visions  
Seen through torn shreds of the sailing clouds.  
Above the snowfield one rock against the sky  
Shaped out of silence a naked tune  
Like a violin when the tune forsakes the instrument  
And the pure sound flies through the ears' gate  
And a whole sky floods the pool of one mind.

## O NIGHT, O TREMBLING NIGHT

O night O trembling night O night of sighs  
O night when my body was a rod O night  
When my mouth was a vague animal cry  
Pasturing on her flesh O night  
When the close darkness was a nest  
Made of her hair and filled with my eyes

(O stars impenetrable above  
The fragile tent poled with our thighs  
Among the petals falling fields of time  
O night revolving all our dark away)

O day O gradual day O sheeted light  
Covering her body as with dews  
Until I brushed her sealing sleep away  
To read once more in the uncurtained day  
Her naked love, my great good news.

By Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg

# THE 10 MISTAKES OF PARENTS

**They expect too much too soon, or too little too late**

IT IS fashionable today to hold parents responsible for all juvenile delinquency and all maladjustments of the young, to brand the female of the species "Moms"—and worse. This article does not aim to add to this hymn of blame. Mothers and fathers are, of course, by no means solely responsible for everything the younger generation does, nor for the tribulations boys and girls inevitably suffer in the process of growing up.

**Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg**, who has four children of her own, has been a writer, lecturer, and counsellor on child-parent relationships for three decades.

With the wealth of new knowledge available about childhood needs, some mothers and fathers have come to feel that if only they could apply this information perfectly, they would get perfect results. No amount of knowledge or insight on the part of parents can, however, keep all difficulties from arising. But knowledge and understanding *can* help parents handle difficult situations as they arise, and can make the relationship between the two generations more satisfying and rewarding.

It is largely a misconception of what to expect that leads many mothers and fathers to:



### **Mistake No. 1.**

*Feeling Entirely Responsible for the Way Their Children Turn Out*

Too many parents feel a deep sense of guilt when their offspring fail to come up to certain arbitrary or conventional standards. They torture themselves with such questions as: "What did we do wrong? What did we fail to do?" In each crisis they reproach themselves with: "If only we had done something different that time!" "Should we have sent him to camp sooner—or so soon?" "Perhaps we should never have let them start the comics." "Should we have stopped her friendship with that girl?"

It is a mistake to assume that in every situation there is just one "right" thing to do. This oversensitivity to children's short-

comings is the obverse of the vain pride which makes many mothers and fathers take credit for a daughter's good looks, for a son's exceptional ear for music or talent for science. No credit is due parents for the gifts their children bring into the world; nor any blame for their native shortcomings. It is a mistake to think of boys and girls as so much clay to be moulded by the parents' will and skill. Multitudes of other influences are operating on children, many of them quite beyond the control of parents.



### **Mistake No. 2.**

*Expecting Too Much Too Soon*

Some parents treat their children as if they expected them to have been born polite, unselfish,

truthful, thrifty, and with a love of cleanliness and order. Such parents are bound to find themselves discouraged, and even humiliated. They brand the two-year-old as "naturally stubborn, like Uncle Willie on the other side of the family," instead of recognizing that he is in that familiar, negativistic stage when a child first tastes the power of saying "no."

As each succeeding phase comes along—the "middle-age" child's complete disregard for cleanliness, or the adolescent's absorption in himself—parents act as though the child's character were going to be fixed for life in that phase.

Mothers and fathers are often so shocked and so quick to punish because of the disposition of young children to lie, cheat, or steal that they weaken their chances of influencing character in its formative stages. At the same time, they destroy the child's faith in his capacity to become an acceptable or "good" person.

### **Mistake No. 3.**

#### *Expecting Too Little Too Late*

While many parents set their sights too high, other parents demand too little. They are so afraid of frustrating their sons and



Drawings by George Reckas

daughters that they let them do anything they please.

For fear of "inhibiting" the youngsters by being firm about quiet play until breakfast time, these parents allow them to stamp and shriek around the house early in the morning. The radio is tuned in on the children's favorite programs, while Mother and Father forego their news broadcasts, musical programs, and favorite comedians.

Because they give their children no hint of the idea that children, too, no matter how young, have obligations, they should not be surprised when these children grow up without an awareness of, and a proper consideration for, other people.

## **Mistake No. 4.**

### *Refusing To Accept Each Child As He Is*

A mother is disappointed when her little girl turns out to be a plain tomboy instead of a starry-eyed, curly-headed beauty. A father feels let down when his son isn't a big strapping athlete. Another kind of father is broken-hearted if his son isn't a brilliant student. Many parents hold up the example of some other child—a sister or brother, a cousin or neighbor. The one definite effect which this can be expected to produce is that of discouraging the prodded child and making him hate the shining paragon.

Parents who keep before their children the taunting picture of

some ideal child are sending their young ones off to a bad start. It prevents them from helping a child do the most with *his* interests, *his* abilities, *his* personality, and *his* potentialities. Children are bound to sense it when their parents are disappointed in them; more than anything else, this can keep them from developing their own best selves.

## **Mistake No. 5.**

### *Making Children Self-conscious*

The same grown-ups who admire the charm of natural, unspoiled, unaffected children, will go out of their way to make their own children self-conscious. As soon as a child can talk, these parents insist that he say "How do you do?" and "Thank you." How much wiser to wait and let him absorb our social customs and graces—first by observing, then by copying.

Strangers force their friends' children into conversation, badgering them with questions—not with any desire to know the answers but with an almost cruel insistence that the youngsters be amusing.

Worst of all, perhaps, is the habit grown-ups have of repeating the children's bright sayings in front of them, then wondering why children become "show-offs."





Parents talk in the presence of their boys and girls as though the youngsters can't hear or understand. Such adults should take to heart the story of the little girl who, hearing one of her mother's guests say to the other, "Not very o-r-e-t-t-y, is she," chimed in, "No, but very s-m-a-r-t."

### Mistake No. 6.

#### *Confusing the Role of Discipline*

Parents often smother boys and girls with a host of rules and prohibitions, instead of keeping these down to a minimum to be consistently observed. They resort to threats, punishments, rewards, and other "disciplinary devices," instead of calmly making their children feel that the parents *do* mean what they say, and that what they

say is well considered and for the good of all. Parents often undermine their children's values by shooting off heavy ammunition in trivial situations and then having this same ammunition sputter helplessly when something serious occurs.

Mothers and fathers rarely stop to ask: What is it that I want "discipline" to *do*? They forget that children must have control for their own protection and for the protection of others, not just in order to obey rules. There is no doubt that children need authority. And in a democracy, parental authority and obedience are tools for developing *self-discipline*; we guide and train not *for* obedience, but for self-discipline *through* obedience.





### **Mistake No. 7.**

*Giving Children Too Many Choices and Being Afraid to Say "No!"*

It is usually the "enlightened" parents, the conscientiously "modern" ones, who make the mistake of asking a very young child, "Do you want to go to bed now, darling?" They should know that darling *never* wants to go to bed. They fail to recognize that little boys and girls feel most contented when these small but important decisions are made for them. Youngsters will go to bed, for example, without much fuss, if it is made easy and pleasant and is *taken for granted*.

These same parents are slow at realizing that their children's end-

less *why's* are more often a game than an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. They haven't trained themselves to differentiate between the *why* that asks a question and the *why* that is designed to put off some inevitable moment—or simply to get Mama's or Papa's goat.

This same group of enlightened parents has somewhere picked up the notion that they must never say *no* to a child. It is certainly wise to use this word sparingly; however, parents who have dropped it from their vocabularies often end by being afraid of their children. In the name of freedom, they give their children decisions to make before the youngsters are ready. The latter therefore make choices that are arbitrary or capricious. Such children can only go through the motions of taking on responsibility, and, as a result, become confused in their concept of what choosing and making judgments really mean. This makes it hard for them to grow naturally into accepting responsibility.

### **Mistake No. 8.**

*Trying to Be a Pal to Their Sons and Daughters*

Many modern parents, themselves revolting against the type of parent who demanded a respect he did little to deserve, or who

ried to play the role of God to his family, resolve to be a "pal" to their children.

What the pally parent forgets is that, while a girl loves a shopping spree with her mother and a boy loves a fishing trip with his father, they also like to think of their parents as adults. They want the kind of understanding that comes through maturity, insight, perspective, and a sense of proportion. They want their parents to keep standards, even if they themselves rebel against them. Children need resources to draw

### **Mistake No. 9.**

#### *Overprotecting Their Children*

Modern parents have been oversolicitous about their sons and daughters. Because science has made great strides in health improvement, these parents try to protect their children against all germs, falls, and bumps.

They fear the vicarious excitement and adventure supplied by the radio, the comics, and the movies. Because it is difficult to guide children through this maze, they try to banish it altogether. Such prohibitions are, of course, futile, and only deepen the chasm between the generations.

If the parents could, they would confine their children's friendships to the most "desirable" boys and girls, thus depriving them of a variety of satisfactions and a wider range of experiences. In the same way, parents try to protect their children from family cares and worries. Though boys and girls must not be allowed to feel overburdened, insulating them completely from household concerns makes them feel shut out. It can also make youngsters panicky. In the case of grave illness, death, or financial reverses, even in the event of serious difficulties between mother and father, children are better off being told the



on and they need them as urgently as companionship and uncritical friendship. For such resources they turn to parents—not to pals.



truth than being left to feel that a black cloud, too terrible to mention, is hanging over them.

Naturally, what a child is told and how he is told must be tempered to his age and his ability to understand. Similarly, the responsibility and the work that a child is expected to do should depend on his strength and maturity. But the parent who keeps his child from sharing in household chores and family cares is depriving him of valuable experiences and of the sense of identification with the family group.

#### **Mistake No. 10.**

*Living FOR, Instead of WITH, Their Children*

It is possible to touch off an endless chain of sacrifice, so that

no generation of parents gets the satisfaction of knowing how far its sacrifices have been worthwhile. By the time one generation settles back to see how its children are faring, the children are busy sacrificing for *their* children.

These martyr-like, consciously "self-denying" parents tend to work toward a day in the dim future when their sacrifices will pay dividends. They are bound to be disappointed, for that day will never arrive. Far better to savor each day as it comes along, to get satisfaction and delight from each phase of the children's development, to enjoy family life while it is being lived.

Being a good parent means making oneself progressively unnecessary. Instead of clinging to children, prolonging the children's need of them, parents should affirm the children's desire to be persons in their own right. Parents continue to be men and women, husbands and wives long after they cease to be full-time practising parents. And in those roles, as men and women taking active parts in the life of their community and of their times, they would probably present to their children a more attractive and more significant picture of adulthood.



The very best parents make mistakes. But it is the kind of mistake, not the number, that matters. The mistakes we have discussed usually arise from an almost grim determination on the part of parents to do right by their children. "Principles" are adopted conscientiously, then too often followed

mechanically, with the parents never really developing any understanding of their children or of themselves as parents. Instead of trying so hard to follow rules, they would do better to deepen their understanding of childhood and to enrich their emotional relationships with their children.

Modern studies have yielded tremendous resources of insight into the mental and emotional development of children; these are increasingly available to anyone who cares. If parents had more faith in their children—and in themselves—they might be able to relax and enjoy their children and their own lives more. If they succeed in this, they can afford to make mistakes along the way without fear of doing much injury to anyone. For when the feelings are right, when knowledge is backed by understanding—all's well with the family.

END

## 48 *Pre-print*

Karl Heinrich Marx was European in his background, cosmopolitan in his outlook. Born May 5, 1818, of a middle-class family that had exchanged Judaism for Christianity, he knew the cross winds of French and German culture which swept through his home town of Trier-Trèves. His mother, Henriette Pressburg, had come from the Netherlands. His father, Heinrich Marx, a not too prosperous lawyer, was a loyal Prussian. To his parents, Karl Marx early became a stranger with a stranger's thoughts. (Henriette Marx wrote once, in her Dutch-tainted German, that "it would have been very much better if Karl had made a lot of capital instead of writing so much about capital.")

## THE CHILD KARL

—Martin Ebon

From "World Communism Today," Whittlesey House. To be published next month.



*“Great Britain’s national existence . . . depends upon the miners”*

# NO COALS AT NEWCASTLE

**Europe counted on British mines to revive her industry. But now England is shivering too**

**By H. R. Pinckard**

**T**HE REAL villain in the European crisis is not the "Iron Curtain" or imperial rivalries, but that doddering aristocrat of the industrial revolution: Coal. By a strange twist of fate, natural attrition has transformed what was a surplus of coal into a deficit, precisely when fuel is more sorely needed than ever.

When the history of this era is finally and objectively written, that circumstance will be ranked in decisiveness with the defeat of the Axis and even, perhaps, with the invention of atomic energy. The ultimate hope of the future may lie in the heat products of nuclear fission, but right now the

titanic job of postwar reconstruction in Europe cannot proceed without old-fashioned coal to stoke furnaces and turn wheels and warm the underfed bodies of the workers.

Before the war, the coal mines of Great Britain produced a surplus. The black ore was the nation's most lucrative item of export. Quite suddenly, during the war but not because of it, British coal production slumped. It fell off so badly that today the British Isles cannot produce enough for their own use. And their former customers on the Continent must go begging. There is no coal for them at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the British port whose name was once a byword for oversupply.

So, for the second consecutive winter, the people of Great Britain are bitterly cold, and British industry has been brought almost

**H. R. Pinckard** has been interested in coal ever since he became editor of the *Huntington (West Virginia) Herald-Advertiser* twenty years ago. Huntington is the gateway to the southern West Virginia coal fields.

to a standstill—for lack of coal. During the summer and fall, the Labour government used every known means of propaganda and persuasion to boost coal production, but results were meager. On the Continent, every Western nation, save only Belgium, now lacks the coal to meet even minimum, starvation-level requirements.

In casting about for solutions, experts concentrated upon the rich Ruhr Valley of Germany. Production there has improved somewhat since the British (whose occupation zone it's in) agreed to joint Anglo-American supervision. But there is no hope of a basic answer here. Ruhr coal cannot completely fill the bins left empty by the disappearance of England's former surplus. And as the experts study employment and production figures of the British collieries, they can only shake their heads in deep concern.

And no wonder. The figures show that today about 700,000 British miners are digging less than 200,000,000 metric tons of coal per year; in the peak year of British production, 1913, a total of 287,400,000 tons was removed from the ground by a labor force of more than 1,100,000 men.

From 1910 through 1938 the British rarely failed to export at least 50,000,000 tons of coal. Economists say that half of that is the bare minimum of exportable

coal needed to keep British trade in balance. The alternative is borrowing—piling new debts upon old—and continuance of the so-called austerity program which, in turn, whittles away at the incentives and compulsions that make men work.

The British themselves are under no illusion about the gravity of the problem. "Our national existence becomes quite impossible if we cannot produce enough coal; the whole industrial program depends upon the miners." That blunt statement was contained in the Economic Survey for 1947, yet the government—having nationalized the mines one year ago—was able during the year to find no medicines which promised anything like a permanent cure for a sick industry.

Maladies attacking the British mining industry go back over half a century, but their real malignancy was not felt until the decade from 1921 to 1931. During those years the industry was contracting as a result of the diminishing demand for export coal. Unemployment was severe in the coal fields, and during the worst years of the slump, two-thirds or more of the men were laid off in some mining communities.

Poverty had always been a general condition in these communities, but wages fell still further as the number of jobless increased.

The miners and their families suffered hardships such as few industrial groups have ever known. And it was during this decade that the British miner, long inarticulate and living in isolated communities, developed antagonisms which still persist in spite of the five-day week, socialized mining, and special incentives granted, reluctantly, by government managers.

**I**T WAS A DECADE of hate. The mineowners slashed wages and payroll rosters with callused indifference; the men responded with strikes and surly words.

Hate for the mineowners broadened into hate for the mines themselves, and it became the determination of every miner to see that none of his sons ever had to follow his own lowly, insecure, socially inferior profession.

Young people have been quick to follow this parental advice, and although British census figures have been complicated by extensive boundary changes, these figures show that during the past quarter-century young miners have decamped from their communities sixteen times as fast as have persons over thirty-five. This trend away from the mines has had other aftereffects: Older men produce less coal, have fewer children, are more prone to sickness and accidents, and are harder to arouse by emotional appeals based on pa-

triotism and politics. Through the dual attrition of a declining birth-rate and increasing emigration of the young, the mining communities are slowly being starved. Their death is inevitable unless the government managers succeed in making them and the near-by pits more attractive and satisfying places in which to live and work.

Conditions above ground can be remedied by government subsidy and special favor; but down in the pits there are definite limits to the improvements that can be made in the miners' working conditions. The average American knows very little about these conditions and has listened to too many glib remarks that "all the British need is some American know-how."

Of course, the statement does contain a grain of truth. For the lack of mechanization in British mines and the consequent low productivity per worker, both the miners and the former mineowners are partly to blame. The miners' union took the stand that machines displace men, and consequently the miners opposed the machines—meanwhile clamoring constantly for nationalization. The operators took advantage of the cheap labor during the decade of contraction, and protected themselves against competition by cartelization and trade-association agreements. But even where modern mining machinery could have been installed,

ownership hesitated because of the nationalization threat.

British mines are almost all deep, or shaft, mines. In contrast to the slope mines of the southern Appalachian regions of the U. S.—which are usually entered from mountain outcroppings, and require no shaft—British mines are hard to reach, the veins of coal are thin, the heat is terrific, the ventilating systems inadequate, the wetness constant, and the humidity enervating. During most of his working hours, the British miner must kneel, crouch, sit, or lie prone, encumbered by knee pads and elbow pads as well as by his tools. Certainly his equipment is primitive by American standards, but the machinery used in most American mines could not be adapted to the small shafts and narrow driveways of Britain's underground workings.

In most British and continental mines, a number of veins are mined simultaneously, necessitating "back-filling," or the replacement, with slag or other materials, of the coal removed. In a recently-opened British mine, coal is being taken from eleven seams averaging slightly more than forty inches in thickness. Such comparatively thin deposits would hardly interest an American coal operator unless the superior quality of the product enabled him to sell it at a premium.

Further complicating the job of the British miner and engineer is the characteristic "faulting," or tilting, of their coal seams. They are rarely able to pursue a vein on or near a horizontal line. The difficulty of operating machinery while working on an incline of anywhere from 10 to 45 degrees is almost unimaginable.

Contrast these conditions with those of the best American mines: The famous Pittsburgh seam, from which U. S. Steel and other large producers take fine metallurgical coal, varies between five and six feet in thickness, with little deviation in grade. At Holden, West Virginia, and elsewhere in the southern Appalachians, the Island Creek seam ranges up to six and one-half feet. In such lush and level workings the most highly specialized machinery can be used for each operation. Teams of machine operators move from room to room on a split-second schedule. Efficiency both of men and machines is raised to a peak which could never be attained under typical European conditions.

Where the cover is not too heavy, so-called "strip mining," in which the covering of earth and rock is removed from the coal by giant shovels, is practised in certain parts of the United States. By American standards, this type of mining is far more productive per man-hour than any other. The

British, who refer to this as "open-cast mining," are not much in favor of it, because of the havoc it wreaks and the ugly scars it leaves behind. They have even legislated against it. Whereas the most scenic-minded American states require only that the dirt be replaced after the coal is removed, the British demand that it be put back precisely as it was. Topsoil must be carefully sorted and restored, a process which irked U. S. engineers no end when they were required to follow it during the war.

**S**INCE MENDING Britain's coal problem seems insuperable, and the productivity of her mines would, at best, be low, the impatient observer may ask why Europe should not be supplied with coal from other sources. What about Poland, a major exporter of coal before the war? What about the Ruhr and Saar Valley mines in western Germany?

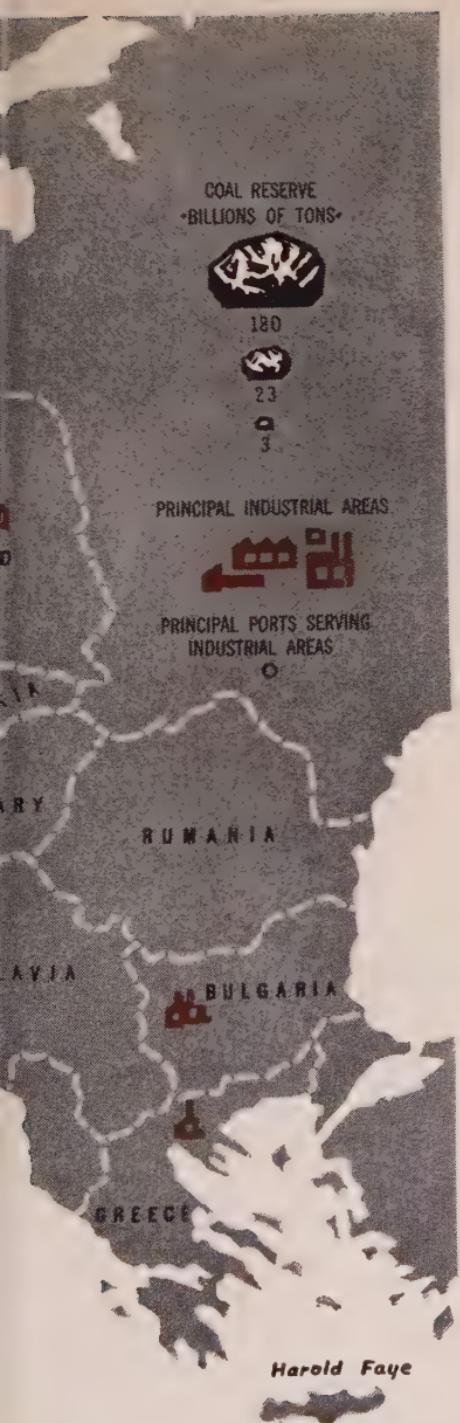
Well, Poland is sending coal southward, but it must be remembered that she is not associated with the nations responding to the Marshall Plan. She moves in the Soviet orbit and has heavy commitments to send coal and coke to Russia. German coal is being exported to other European countries, and Ruhr production has increased since its 175,000 underground miners received incentives

in the form of additional food coupons. However, the German transportation system suffered severely from bombing during the war and is now not more than half capable of doing what it is expected to do. Historically, coal from the Ruhr has served the industrial regions near by. On the other hand, coal from Britain followed a geographic pattern which is not easily changed when there are insufficiencies of everything which the change would require.

In the years before the war, British coal was dumped at the large ports of Europe, and industries naturally became concentrated around those ports. If it was not used in the immediate area, it was hauled to other industrial centers by short rail hauls, or by barges on rivers and canals. This left the European transport system largely free for other industrial purposes.

Today an attempt is being made to distribute Ruhr coal all over Europe by an unnaturally long rail haul, and the ramshackle railroad equipment of Germany and the receiving countries can't carry the burden. Lewis H. Brown, chairman of the board of the Johns-Manville Corporation, who made a special study of western Germany's economic plight for U. S. General Lucius D. Clay last year, stressed the folly of sending Ruhr





NO COALS AT NEWCASTLE

coal on journeys it should never undertake. He found that countries obtaining coal from Germany in cars that had been repaired by the military governments were keeping the good cars and sending back only those in bad repair.

Mr. Brown recommended that the 10,000,000 tons of Ruhr coal now being sent to France, Russia, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, and other western European countries be kept at home and used to fuel German factories. These, he believed, could then supply some or all of the major shortages in fabricated materials so badly needed for the coal mines of Britain and continental countries.

Of course, Mr. Brown was speaking as an industrialist, not as a statesman or world diplomat. France and to a lesser extent the other Allied governments have been unwilling to see a rebirth of German heavy industry—particularly in the Ruhr, where most of the weapons of two World Wars were forged. France will not agree to any plan under which German militarism could be revived—and who can blame her?

Mr. Brown concluded his report

*As the map shows, Europe has billions of tons of coal below ground, but most of it will remain there. Antiquated equipment, disgruntled miners, political barriers, and a wrecked transportation system cannot meet even a small proportion of Europe's requirements.*

with a sharp criticism of what he called the Labour government's failure to offer the miners adequate incentives. Mr. Brown may hardly be expected to have any love for a Socialist government, but it brings up the question of what effect, if any, nationalization of the British mines has had on production.

Certainly it has not improved the morale of the miners, once the celebration of the event was over and they discovered that the new government could not make any immediate improvements in their working conditions. The National Coal Board, which operates the British mines, is made up largely of former executives of the old companies. The same is true of lesser executives and supervisors. It could hardly be otherwise, yet the miners have been seriously disillusioned by this.

Yorkshire miners, who struck last September when asked to increase their daily "stint," or the amount of coal to be cut during the working day, remained for some time quite as unresponsive to the pleas of their government as they had in the past to exhortations of private owners.

Meanwhile the Labour government speaks with confidence of its plans to modernize and mechanize the mines. It expresses publicly no doubts that the labor reserve can be built up to previous heights by

various adjustments and special incentives—these to be paid for out of profits when increased production per man-hour has been brought about through training and a modernization program.

The latter will require tremendous expenditures. More than a billion dollars worth of machinery is needed simply to dig coal efficiently, but even if such machinery were in operation, the raw coal could not be properly prepared for market.

A Parliamentary committee appointed in 1947 found that the ash in British coal is 50 per cent higher than the residue considered excessive twenty years ago. This means, among other things, that: (1) the already overburdened British transport system must carry millions of tons of trash, which normally would be rejected at the mine tipple; (2) the chilblained British housewife cannot squeeze as much heat out of her rationed supply; (3) industry cannot operate as efficiently as it did; and (4) miners cannot buy as much with their take-home pay as they once did, and consequently have neither the strength nor the desire to work harder. It is a vicious circle and the longer it continues the more vicious it becomes.

There are a number of these circles, all interlocking and all aggravating the principal problem of export coal. As an example,

take the wooden mine props used to support the slate or shale in the "roof" of a coal mine. Britain's forests are overcut, but Sweden has plenty of forest products to exchange for coal. Sweden could send Britain not only mine props, but lumber for the housing it needs so desperately. With a severe coal scarcity, however, Sweden is obliged to use these cuttings for fuel—a circumstance much publicized by British government leaders, along with the figurative warning: "They are burning our houses up north."

The task of uncoiling all these circles may be too great for a people who are tired, hungry, poorly clothed, and badly housed. Even the extension of machine mining, held out as the only hope for permanent British economic recovery, may prove to be only a quicker way to complete deterioration of the mining industry. As *The Lancet*, British medical magazine, said, "The psychological implica-

tions of mechanization, in personnel selection and in counteracting the new tensions it introduces, also await exploration . . . Under certain conditions . . . machinery can make a colliery a mechanized hell."

Can human nerves and anatomies take such punishment—particularly those of men who, in the last year for which figures are available, received compensation for sickness or accident in the proportion of one man in five?

There are many mining experts and economists in this country who take a dim view of Britain's chances to survive against such odds. Not long ago, Britain's first atomic pile, a small one, for the production of isotopes of uranium, began operating. Will scientific advance in the peacetime use of atomic fuels be rapid enough to make up for the disaster in coal? It seems doubtful, but smaller straws of hope have been clutched by fuel-hungry nations.      END

## 48      *Pre-print*

### WHEN PEASANTS SMILE

He had taken his jacket off in the midday heat and he carried it folded, the lining side out, in the scrupulous peasant habit of wariness and heed that saved garment and object from destruction and passed it, like an honor from hand to hand. When he came into step beside her, he said *bon jour* and lifted two black-rimmed work-bitten fingers to his hat brim, but he did not smile. (Because only the civilized smile at greeting, she thought, walking beside him; it took living here with Ferdl and with them to learn it. After a lifetime of Paris and Dinard and Biarritz, it took me a year of life here before I learned that peasants smile at weddings, or when they're drunk on Sundays, or when they dance, as if a smile were a medal brought out and polished on the under part of the sleeve and not worn every day.)

—*Kay Boyle*

From 1939, Simon and Schuster. To be published next month.

SING ME

EUGENE SMITH



# HOMEMADE SONG

Whether done the old English way or crooned for  
the juke-boxes, it should be sung for love

By Vincent McHugh

**O**N MARLBOROUGH Street in Newport, one bright summer morning, I met three Negro women singing a ballad. They were singing the juke-box words, and I said, "Bet you don't know the real words to that." They said no, sing it for us. "It's a little rough," I said, just to be polite, but they said, "Oh, we're grown up." So I sang it for them, in the warm breeze off the bay. When we said goodby we were friends, and one of the women called wisely and gaily after me, "See what a song will do?"

A song will do almost anything—make friends, wash windows, cook a pot of beans, or put a baby to sleep with a smile. (Try singing that wonderful, sad old Creole lullaby, "Salangadou," to a baby

**Vincent McHugh**, novelist and poet, virtually created a folk character in *Caleb Catlum's America*. His latest novel is *The Victory*, his most recent ballad, *Dusky Sally* ('47 December).

of any age, and you will see.) But it's got to be a good song. Pop songs are all right, except that they're written by machines, sung by machines, and played on machines. When somebody invents a machine to listen to them, we can forget the whole damn thing and go on to some kind of music that has a little human feeling in it.

The homemade songs have that kind of feeling. I don't like to call them *folk songs*, because the term has a dirty little air of condescension about it. But whatever they're called, we have an astonishing wealth and variety of them, all interrelated, like an American family that has moved from East to West, and South to North, leaving cousins and aunts and grandchildren all over the place.

Thus an eighteenth-century Irish ballad, "The Unfortunate Rake," crossed the Atlantic and became "One Morning in May" (not to be confused with Hoagy Carmichael's



GJON MILI

*Susan Reed*

ong of that name). "The Young Girl Cut Down in Her Prime" (see page 148) is another old British version. In the South, the soldier-ake of the Irish original somehow put on skirts and got transformed into a reckless girl. The character remained a woman in the grisly Negro adaptation called "St. James' Infirmary Blues," but turned back into a young man in the well-known Western ballad about the streets of Laredo.

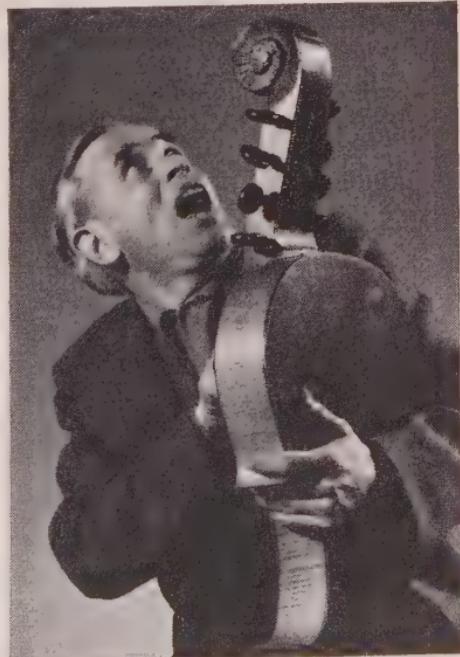
Burl Ives sings it as "Cowboy's Lament"; and with Burl Ives, the homemade songs and the home-grown singers swim out into the mainstream of American commercial entertainment. What's going to happen to them in those muddy waters isn't very clear yet, but two things may be guessed at: (1) most people will like the real thing if they get half a chance to hear it, and (2) they won't get half a chance if the sharpies who run a large part of the entertainment business have anything to say about it. The sharpies, as they themselves will tell you, know best what people want, and what people want is, always and forever, a phoney.

Some things have happened already. But before we go into them, we might define what we're talking about. Jazz songs and the blues, anthems, Negro and white spirituals, Shaker hymns (including "Who Will Bow and Bend Like

a Willow?") and the wonderful eighteenth-century fuguing songs—all these are a little outside the story, though they tie into it. We'll do better to stick to the music sung purely for work or pleasure: the English, Scottish, Irish, Creole, Yiddish, Spanish, and other ballads, all more or less domesticated, plus the Negro and regional songs, the Indian songs, the lullabies, calls, hollers, dance songs, river-boat songs, and the like.

As a kind of base line, listen to Burl Ives's record of "Down in the Valley," a straight homemade song by a straight singer. His broad Midwestern style, which has a touch of Celtic drama in it, gives

CJON MILI



John Jacob Niles

# THE YOUNG GIRL CUT DOWN IN HER PRIME

AS I WAS A WALK-ING ONE MID-SUM-MER MORN-ING, AS I WAS A-  
SO RAT-TLE YOUR DRUMS AND PLAY YOUR FIFE O-VER ME, SO RAT-TLE YOUR  
AND WHEN I AM DEAD, TO THE CHURCH THEY WILL CAR-RY ME, SIX — PRET-TY

WALK-ING A-LONG AND A-LONG, WHO SHOULD I SEE BUT MY OWN DEAR-EST  
DRUMS AS WE MARCH A-LONG, THEN RETURN TO YOUR HOME, AND THINK ON — THAT  
MAID-ENS TO BEAR UP MY PALL, AND IN EACH OF THEIR HANDS, A BUNCH OF — PRIM

DAUGH-TER, WITH HER HEAD WRAPPED IN FLAN-NEL ON A HOT SUM-MER'S DAY ?  
YOUNG GIRL: O — THERE GOES A YOUNG GIRL CUT- DOWN IN HER PRIME.  
ROS-ES, SAY-ING, THERE GOES A TRUE-HEART-ED GIRL TO HER HOME.

# THE COWBOY'S LAMENT

By permission of Ellis Siegmester from "Treasury of American Song" by Siegmester and Downie (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)

AS I WALKED OUT IN THE STREETS OF LA-RE-DO, AS  
O BEAT THE DRUM SLOW-LY AND PLAY THE FIFE LOW-LY, AND  
GET SIX JOL-LY COW-BOYS TO CAR-RY MY COF-FIN, GET

I WALKED OUT IN LA-RE-DO ONE DAY, I SPIED A POOR COW-BOY WRAPPED  
PLAY THE DEAD MARCH AS YOU CARRY ME A-LONG, TAKE ME TO THE GREEN VALLEY AND  
SIX PRET-TY GIRLS — TO CAR-RY MY PALL, PUT BUN-CHES OF ROS-ES ALL

UP IN WHITE LIN-EN, WRAPPED UP IN WHITE LIN-EN AND COLD AS THE CLAY.  
LAY THE SOD O'ER ME, FOR I'M A POOR COW-BOY AND I KNOW I'VE DONE WRONG.  
O-VER MY COF-FIN, PUT ROS-ES TO DEAD-EN THE CLODS AS THEY FALL

# ST. JAMES INFIRMARY BLUES

By permission of Carl Sandburg, from "American Songbag" (Harcourt, Brace & Co.)

AS I PASSED BY THE OLD IN-FIR-MARY — I —  
O WHEN I DIE JUST BU-RY ME IN A  
SIX CRAP SHOOT-ERS AS PALL BEAR-ERS LET A

SAW MY SWEET-HEART THERE,  
BOX-BACK COAT AND HAT,  
CHORUS GIRL SING ME A SONG,  
ALL STRETCHED OUT ON A

PUT A TWENTY-DOL-LAR GOLD-PIECE ON MY  
WITH A JAZZ BAND ON MY

TAB-LE SO PALE SO COLD SO FAIR  
WATCH-CHAIN, TO LET THE LORD KNOW I'M STAND-ING PAT  
HEARSE — TO RAISE HELL AS WE GO A LONG.

him a common ground for all kinds of regional and other special songs. He doesn't strike the sharp Oklahoma style of Woody Guthrie, where the West and South meet, and he doesn't sing Southern Negro ballads in the basic shouting style of Leadbelly, or render cowboy songs in the genuine easy Westernism of Russ Pike or Bill Bender—though it's hard to be sure about the West. Most working cowhands won't sing even for their womenfolks, and an old lead steer with a good memory could probably bellow out more Western songs than ever got into the books. But Ives's big baritone, easy riding and steely true on the pitch, is legal tender in any style. If he sticks to his last, he can do for homemade songs in general what Bessie Smith did for blues.

Now see what happens to this music—both the good and the bad things—when it gets kicked out into the great American whirlwind. The point to be kept in mind is that these songs, very often pure music in themselves, come directly out of a life shared in common, a way of thinking and feeling, and refer back to it. Cut them off from that way of feeling and they're

*Our folk music crossed the ocean along with our ancestors. The young girl in England became a cowboy in the American West, and a dead gambler in the South. But the words of all three ballads remain strikingly alike*

nothing—or at best an oddity, a trick.

One of the worst of these tricks is the hillbilly music played all day long on a good many of the small Southern and Western radio stations. Listen to the high, round tone of Rebecca Tarwater singing the classic "Barbara Allen" for one of the Library of Congress recordings, and follow that with John Jacob Niles's version of "Little Mohee," and the old love song, "Ten Thousand Miles," as Aunt Molly Jackson sings it. Notice the progressively sharper and more whining tone of the three singers. Even if we allow for sectional and personal variations (Niles, of course, is himself a collector), we may recognize three late stages in the decadence of the Elizabethan

*Aunt Molly Jackson*



SID GROSSMAN



Leadbelly



Richard Dyer-Bennet

tradition among the Southern mountain people.

The hillbillies have given this tradition its final vulgarization.

They have made a gag out of it, and the gag makes money. But the people who listen to it most fondly, and who seem to get some kind of genuine emotion out of it, are themselves the descendants of the old ballad singers—lost, like their music, in the faceless and toneless desert of the industrial towns.

But before we decide that the tradition is a dead duck, we may look around and find it springing up at one of its sources again. In the New York night clubs, a young Anglo-Canadian, Richard Dyer-Bennet, has been reviving the pure and gentle clarity of the old English airs and ballads. If his at-

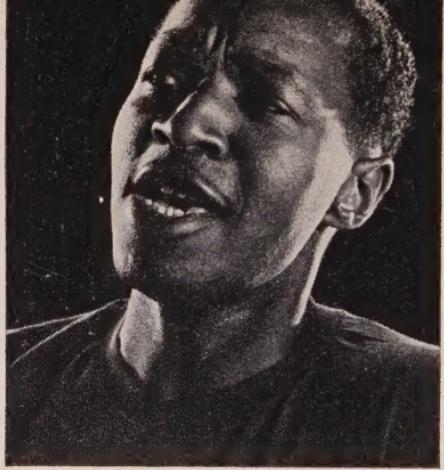
tempts at American Negro ballads sound almost comic—the gap in idiom is too much for him—that should not detract from his delicate taste and musicianship in restoring the great period of English song, the period of such composers as Tallis and Morley and Orlando Gibbons, when musical skill became for a while the property of a whole nation.

With professional musicians, and intellectuals in general, the homemade songs aren't always so lucky. The eminent Lincoln biographer, Carl Sandburg, who deserves the thanks of ballad-lovers for his texts in *The American Songbag*, has himself been guilty of some of the worst singing on records: tasteless, draggy, and unbearably precious. We may note,



*“The poor people on the low roads will go right on singing the homemade songs”*

EUGENE SMITH



*Josh White*

GJON MILI

in passing, the kind of musicologist who has no more sense than to take a simple little fiddle tune like "Sourwood Mountain" and arrange it to hell-and-gone in an alien mode; or the kind of manly baritone who has never found out that "expression" is the kiss of death to a sea chantey.

Susan Reed's ballad singing, to the zither and Irish harp, is apparently intended for the people who used to be called sophisticates—i.e., people who make a point of knowing where babies come from. It is full of coy inflections and significant pauses. But her "Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair" shows what she can do when she stops condescending to the music. For the snobs-in-reverse, who hold that no one should touch a ballad unless he has worn high-water jeans all his life, there is the surprising example of Tom Glazer, who belonged to a church choir in Philadelphia, worked at the Li-

brary of Congress, and now sings the homemade songs with taste and a clear sincerity.

A pioneer in the current revival, and potentially one of the best of the ballad singers, Maxine Sullivan, has usually been regarded as a jazz singer, though her gentle and limpid style has always rather puzzled the jazz critics. The incomparably dramatic earlier manner of Josh White, a converted jazz guitarist, in such songs as "Fare Thee Well, O Honey," has tended to become melodramatic.

For some ten years now, it has been evident that the Communist Party USA was making it a matter of policy to cultivate the ballad-singing world and the world of jazz. The effort has not been very successful. The singers of homemade songs have survived that, as they will survive the present copyright squabbles and the million-dollar touch of the big operators.

Some of them may take the high road for a while. But on the low roads, the people who are too poor to be good customers even for the juke-boxes will go right on singing the homemade songs. They will sing them for love, not money. And if someone pitches a quarter into a blind singer's hat, listening to his blind face raised to the sky, that will be for love too—love of the song, and poor people's love for each other on the bad road where the night comes down too soon.

END



Burl Ives sings a home-made song

GJON MILI

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WITH THIS ISSUE, '47 BECOMES...



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